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ABSTRACT

This document addresses the growing need for families and educators to undertake new partnerships in order to prepare children to become successful learners throughout school. Intended for pre-kindergarten through third grade educators and other school personnel interested in developing effective family involvement strategies, programs, and partnerships, this document is designed to take educators through a self-evaluation process that facilitates understanding about continuing changes in the lives of children and families. The document is divided into four sections: (1) "Family Participation in Education," discussing changing demographics in children and families; (2) "Setting the New Vision," focusing on building family and school partnerships; (3) "Successful Programs and Practices," including criteria for selection and descriptions of 12 programs; and (4) "Resources," including a sample letter to families, sample parent checklist, strategies for soliciting family input, funding resources, tips for communicating with potential funders, sample cover letter, and a list of educational organizations. Contains 61 references. (BGC)

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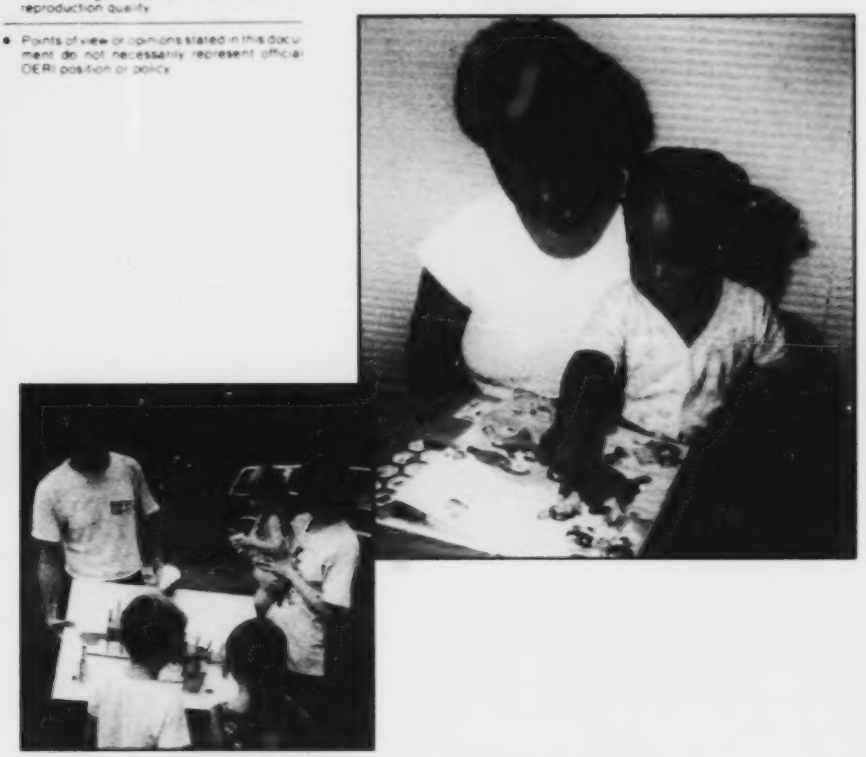

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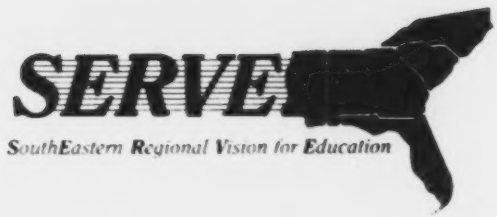

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About the SERVE Laboratory

SERVE, the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education, is a coalition of educators, business leaders, governors, and policymakers who are seeking comprehensive and lasting improvement in education in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The name of the Laboratory reflects a commitment to creating a shared vision of the future of education in the Southeast.

The mission of SERVE is to promote and support the continuous improvement of educational opportunities for all learners in the Southeast.

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Foreword

by Keith L. Thomas

I should have realized I was in trouble when I noticed the different bikes lined up against the fence at my 3-year-old daughter's day care.

"Daddieeeeeee!" Kacie screamed. "You forgot!"
"Kacie, sweetheart, forgot what?"
"It's Bike Day!"
Dag.
"Kacie, Daddy didn't know. I'm sorry."

But sorry wasn't enough. After all, the other kids had their bikes. Her eyes welled with tears.

"Don't worry, Mr. Thomas," one of Kacie's teachers said. "We'll just put her name on one of the bikes we have here."

"But, Daddy, I want *MY* bike!" Kacie said.

Getting Kacie's bike meant backtracking through traffic, traveling all the way back to our house, some 20 minutes away. All for a plastic tricycle with purple tires and 'KACIE' written across the rear.

What choice did I have?

As a parent of two highly impressionable kids—Kacie, and her seven-year-old brother Kyle—I've come to understand that a parent's role in the education process runs the gamut, from helping with homework to going back home to get a bike, or blankie. (Yep, I've done that too.)

In some ways, I see the parent's role as that of a gardener. Children are flowers. By nurturing them, giving them the essentials—love, self-esteem, knowledge, a license to dream and more than enough hugs—we help them to grow and blossom. Then, one day, they enter another garden called school. Here, they get to mix and mingle with more flowers, and are left in the hands of other gardeners—teachers and counselors.

But our role doesn't end. Hardly.

One of my favorite memories involves Kyle being named a math superstar at his school. He was to appear on the school's closed-circuit TV program with several other students. The night before, he wanted to make certain I could make it.

"So, Daddy, are your coming?"
"Yes, Kyle, I'll be there."
"Do you remember what time it is?"
"Yes, son I remember."
"OK. Goodnight, Daddy."
"Goodnight, son."
"Daddy?"
"Yes, Kyle."
"You won't forget?"
"No, son, I won't."

The next morning, I stood in a small classroom as my son, along with more than a dozen other kids, was honored as a math superstar. Mind you, the kids never got to say a word. They just sort of smiled when the student announcer acknowledged them.

Today, there's a little certificate hanging on Kyle's wall that says he's a math superstar. That same certificate would be there whether I'd made it that morning or not. I guess the difference is, every time I look at it, I remember how proud Kyle looked as I stood nearby. I remember our conversation as I walked him back to class.

"Daddy, I'm really glad you came this morning."
"Sure, son. I'm really proud of you."
"I know."
"Daddy."
"Yes, son."
"Thanks for coming."
"You're welcome, son. I wouldn't have missed it for the world."

I could go on about how important those little moments are in the eyes of a child, but you get the picture.

Families and Schools: An Essential Partnership offers the same message in detail. It gives parents and teachers a blueprint for making relations work and highlights how family involvement in the education process is essential. It is the tie that binds us all—parents, teachers, kids.

Believe me, I know.

When I was 4, my father abandoned my family. My mother raised five kids alone. Because she often had to work two and three jobs, she sometimes couldn't make it to school functions. Still, she made time to visit with our teachers and see that we did our homework. She stressed good grades, even in college.

Though she wasn't always there for every school event, she did those little things, things that still matter today. I also had some wonderful

teachers who took time to learn about my family situation and go that extra step to make me feel special, to help me to dream.

My children have been blessed with teachers we've affectionately come to know as Mrs. O and Mr. Mike, who have helped my kids learn and, equally important, feel special. They've also been able to ease my concerns as a parent by becoming people my kids trust and respect. By becoming friends.

Of course, no parent can be there all the time. Schedules, jobs, and other outside responsibilities factor into the daily equation. But when we can it makes a huge difference.

I remember when I returned to Kacie's day care with her bike. She was sitting on the floor with the other kids, listening to a story. I had quietly dropped the bike off in the playground area, then stuck my head in the door. Her teacher, Miss Teresa, stopped reading and tapped Kacie on the shoulder.

Kacie quickly stood up, spun around and mouthed "You brought my bike?"

I smiled and nodded, "Yes." She flashed a broad smile and then blew me a big kiss.

Keith Thomas, an award winning writer, is an associate editor with the Tallahassee Democrat. Thomas is co-author with Ron Hartung of the book, Daddy, I Got the Chicken Pots: The Humor, Heartbreak, and Adventure of Fatherhood.

Preface

Families and Schools: An Essential Partnership

This Sharing Success publication has been produced to address the growing need for families and educators to undertake new partnership roles and responsibilities in order to prepare children, especially in the early years, to become successful learners throughout school. It is intended for Pre-K through third-grade educators and other school personnel interested in developing effective family involvement strategies, programs, and partnerships. Included in the definition of family are mothers, fathers, grandparents, foster parents, siblings, aunts and uncles, non-custodial parents, and others who have primary responsibility for the care and well-being of a child.

The document does not attempt to make distinctions based on characteristics such as income, ethnicity, language, culture, ability, etc. An active family involvement component is needed in all schools, regardless of the characteristics of the students and families they serve. What is more important is that educators know and value the strengths of each family and dedicate themselves to improving the extent and quality of family participation in their schools.

This document is designed to take educators and other readers through a process of self-evaluation that will facilitate understanding about how children's and families' lives have changed, and what those changes mean for education.

It begins with a Teacher Self-Assessment on page 7. This is provided to help educators think about their values, attitudes, and classroom activities with respect to family involvement. After reading the document, the assessment asks that teachers return to the self-assessment and rethink how they might improve family participation in their classrooms.

The remainder of the document is divided into four major sections:

Section I introduces the topic of family participation in education, describes changes taking place with respect to children and families, and describes the impact of demographic changes on educators and families.

Section II puts forward a new vision for family participation and suggests strategies educators might use to build strong family-school partnerships. This section also suggests a model for schoolwide family participation to help implement this vision.

Section III highlights seven well-documented and successful family participation programs and identifies sites in the southeast where these programs are being used in Pre-K through third grade. This section also includes a matrix of 21 family participation programs being used throughout the nation.

Section IV provides a list of resources for educators and other school personnel. It gives examples of how to identify critical needs for family participation at the school, as well as ideas about how to learn more about what families want, and how to develop a schoolwide strategy for family participation. This section also provides information about how to contact potential funding sources, tips for soliciting grant money, and sample forms for requesting funding.

This publication is the first in a comprehensive kit on family participation in education. Future publications will address how other stakeholders such as corporate communities, colleges of education, churches, community-based organizations, and other youth- and family-serving agencies can be more strategically involved in family participation activities.

Teacher Self-Assessment of Family Participation

Before you begin to read this document, please complete this self-assessment. It is designed to help you, as an educator, reflect on your role in promoting and facilitating family involvement in education. As you think of the students and families represented in your classroom, ask yourself these questions and check your responses

Am I responsive to the needs, concerns, and questions of the families I serve?	Yes ❑ No ❑
Do I believe that family involvement in a child's education is crucial, and do I actively seek involvement from all families?	Yes ❑ No ❑
Do I respond to families in a friendly, respectful, supportive, and nonjudgmental manner?	Yes ❑ No ❑
Do I believe that the families I serve respect my role as a teacher who has their children's best interests at heart?	Yes ❑ No ❑
Do I believe that all children in my classroom can succeed regardless of family background, cultural and ethnic difference, race, and social status?	Yes ❑ No ❑
Do I have knowledge about particular needs of each child and his/her family?	Yes ❑ No ❑
Do I have a well-defined plan for family involvement for my classroom?	Yes ❑ No ❑
Do I regularly conduct conferences and meetings with all family members to discuss the progress of each child and solicit input?	Yes ❑ No ❑
Do I regularly send notices to families about meetings, special events, and school programs?	Yes ❑ No ❑
Do I regularly send home art papers, drawings, or writings for the families' enjoyment?	Yes ❑ No ❑
Do I send home written notes about the progress of each child and provide positive feedback to families on a regular basis?	Yes ❑ No ❑
Are family members included in the daily operation of my classroom as visitors, volunteers, field trip chaperones, tutors, or in other roles?	Yes ❑ No ❑

Do I regularly send home ideas or suggestions for home activities that parallel learning at school? Yes ❑ No ❑

Do parents frequently call me for advice about home learning activities? Yes ❑ No ❑

Do I frequently solicit input from families through phone calls, notes, and/or home visits? Yes ❑ No ❑

Do I have knowledge about where families can receive help for their basic needs, and can I provide them with phone numbers, names, and resources to help them? Yes ❑ No ❑

(Portions of this list are adapted from Swan and Morgan (1993). *Collaborating for Comprehensive Services for Young Children and Their Families. The Local Interagency Coordinating Council.)*

If you answered "No" to any of the questions, please read and use this document as a tool to learn more about how you can increase family participation in your classroom or school. Then, return to this questionnaire and answer the following questions.

Am I satisfied with my approach to family participation?

Does my approach to family participation need to change? If so, in what ways?

What are some changes I will make for the rest of this year?

What are some strategies I can use to increase family involvement in my classroom?

Section I

Family Participation in Education

Introduction

The need for effective family involvement in the entire education process of each child has never been more crucial than it is today. Too many children are not ready to start school and have growing academic and nonacademic needs once they arrive at the schoolhouse door.

Few would deny the importance of active family participation in a child's education. At the local level, many schools and districts are testing new ways to involve the family in a partnership to ensure high achievement for every student. At the national and state levels there is renewed emphasis placed on the importance of family involvement in education, as evidenced through national education goals and individual state reform plans.

The focus on the early years and its importance cannot be overstated. The first five years of a child's life provide the basic foundation for the rest of his or her life. It is estimated that nearly 50 percent of whatever a child can become is in place by age five (McCune, n.d.). The early years establish and strengthen the development of cognitive learning, attitudes about learning, and expectations for success. Skills, attitudes, and expectations are well established by the end of grade three (Southern Regional Education Board, 1994). Furthermore, by age three children have acquired more than half the language they will use throughout life (White, 1987).

"It is instinctively understood that family involvement in education is important, and a great deal is known about that importance. As a concept it is greatly praised. However, little use has been made of the research findings that affirm the importance. Schools have not adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of today's families; and teachers have received little, if any, help and training in working with families. And families have not taken nor been asked to take sufficient responsibility in their role as partners with the school or in the education of their children."
Dorothy Rich, President, Home and School Institute, Inc.
The forgotten factor in school success: The family. A policymaker's guide (1985).

While schools and educators have worked for years to provide opportunities for family participation in education, it is time to rethink meaningful participation, and what strategies can be devised in the classroom and school to provide mutual benefits for families, students, and educators.

A recent review of research studies, analyses, reports, and books on family involvement programs provides evidence that family participation in education—activities in the home, participation in school events, interest in and enthusiasm about education—affects children's academic achievement and development (Henderson & Berla, 1994).

Henderson and Berla (1994) suggest that when schools work with families, children succeed not only in school, but throughout their lives. Moreover, the authors report that, more than income or social status, a more accurate prediction of student success is the extent to which families are able to:

- Create a home environment that encourages learning
- Express high expectation for a child's achievement
- Become involved in a child's education at school and in the community.

Increased family participation has benefits for students in terms of:

- Higher grades and test scores
- Better attendance
- More positive attitudes and behavior
- Fewer placements in special education

Henderson and Berla (1994) maintain that families and schools also jointly benefit. Schools that include a strong component of family participation have:

- Improved teacher morale
- Higher ratings of teachers by parents
- More support from families
- Higher student achievement
- Enhanced community support
- Families with greater confidence in the school and teachers
- Families that develop more confidence in helping their children at home
- Teachers who develop higher opinions of parents.

The challenges facing today's children and families have led some to believe that schools have limited ability to increase the quality and quantity of family participation in education. Both families and educators easily blame each other for children's failure. Traditionally cited family barriers such as culture, level of education, feelings of

insecurity or exclusion, language, and time constraints are mentioned. Families may not understand the role they can play, both at home and in the school. Educators may view some parents as uncaring and uninformed about their children's education if they do not live up to a particular ideal of how and when families should be involved.

While the education community cannot be expected to provide for each and every need of the student and the family, it can be expected to provide the best possible education experience, drawing upon the resources available. One of the most underutilized resources for educators is the family, and yet, families very much want to be involved. According to a recent survey conducted by the Institute for Educational Leadership and the Mattel Foundation (as cited in Hellmich, 1995, August 30), 87 percent of parents of elementary school-age children believe it is "extremely important" or "very important" to be involved in their children's school activities. Almost three-fourths of the parents surveyed report that they speak with the teacher several times a year. However, parents seem to have a more difficult time becoming involved with the school itself. Only 48 percent of parents report that they are active in the school's parent-teacher organization. Less than 20 percent of parents report that they have been involved in an advisory council or other group that sets school policy.

If change is to occur, schools and families must enter into a joint partnership with a new resolve, recognizing that behaviors and expectations, as well as roles and responsibilities, must change. This partnership must begin with an understanding of how drastically the lives of children and their families have changed.

One of the most underutilized resources for educators is the family.

Changing Demographics

In past years, family involvement was not necessarily seen as a school responsibility issue or a policy issue. The prevailing belief was that families supported their children's education in the home. They had the time and were interested in supervising learning activities, providing "family time" to talk, read, and play with their children, and ensuring a safe home environment that took care of health and other basic needs. Direct contact with the school primarily was confined to back-to-school nights, chaperoning, fund raising, booster clubs, and an occasional parent/teacher conference. Other prevailing beliefs were that most families were the same, and the needs of students were basically the same. Most classroom teachers and families quickly will agree that these past beliefs and types of family involvement cannot support today's realities.

The Lives of Children

In the 1995 annual report of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Kids Count Data Book*, statistical data provide discouraging trends about the lives and futures of many young children.

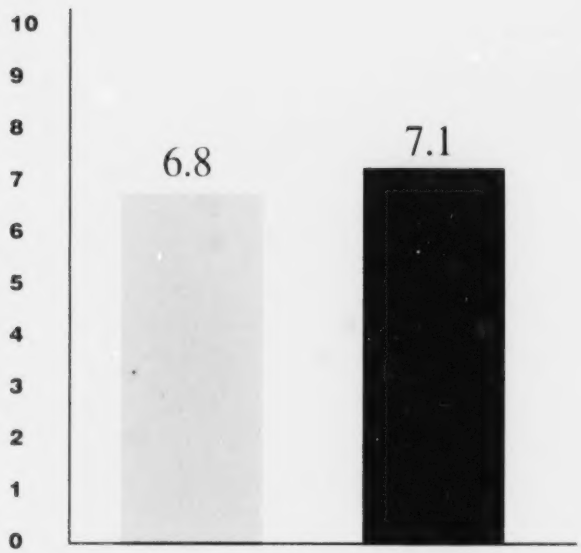
- The percentage of low-birth-weight babies has increased since 1985. In 1992, 7.1 percent of all births were of low weight. Compared to normal birthweight babies, those who are underweight (and survive) are seven to ten times more likely to have school problems.
- Almost one-third (31.5%) of children in America live in poor or near- poor families. Poverty is closely linked to undesirable outcomes in areas such as health, education, emotional well-being, and delinquency.
- The share of families headed by single parents increased from 21.6 percent in 1985 to 25.3 percent in 1992. Children growing up in single-parent families typically do not have the same human or economic resources as children in two-parent households.
- In 1992, there were 353,878 births to unmarried teens ages 15 to 19, compared to 270,922 in 1985. For children born to single, unmarried mothers there is little chance of obtaining the emotional and financial support they need to develop appropriately. Moreover, a child born to a teenage, high school dropout is ten times more likely to be living in poverty by ages 8 to 12.

A 1991 report by the National Association of the State Boards of Education depicts other trends for young preschool children.

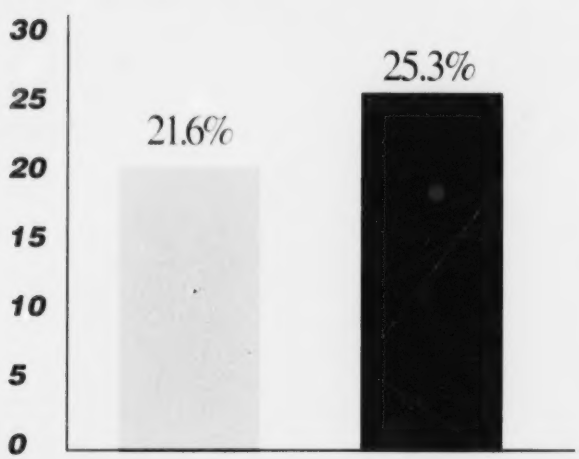
- More than 400,000 young children each year are exposed to health risks such as low birth weight; prenatal exposure to alcohol, drugs, and smoking; lead poisoning; malnutrition; and child abuse and neglect.
- One in four children younger than age 6 are growing up in families that cannot afford safe housing, adequate nutrition, health care, or quality child care. Additionally, one in four children younger than age 6 live in areas that expose them to environmental pollutants or other health hazards.
- Almost one-fourth (25%) of all 8 year olds were at least a grade behind their peers in 1989.

These trends reflect the need to develop more comprehensive prevention strategies for quality early childhood experiences, as well as the need to provide programs that support families and prepare children for school. The challenge for schools is to find effective ways to involve families and other youth-serving agencies in addressing the health, nutritional, and emotional needs of young children.

Percent of Low-Birth-Weight Babies



Percent of Families with Children Headed by a Single Parent



What families do in the time they spend with children...is more important to student success than family income or social status.

Research also has suggested that school success may, in part, be determined by factors that occur long before a child enters the classroom. The 1994 report from the National Education Goals Panel identified four indicators related to school performance: health, immunizations, family-child interaction in reading and storytelling, and preschool experiences. Recent statistics indicate:

- A small gain in reducing the proportion of infants born with two or more health and developmental risks—from 14 percent in 1990 to 13 percent in 1991. (Risks are defined as late or no prenatal care, low maternal weight gain, maternal smoking or alcohol consumption during pregnancy, three or more siblings, or closely spaced births.)
- In 1992, only 55 percent of all 2 year olds had been fully immunized against preventable childhood diseases.
- Two-thirds of preschoolers were read to or told stories regularly in 1993. A 1993 study by the U.S. Department of Education suggested that parents who were college graduates reported that they read daily to their preschool children at twice the rate of parents with less than a college education.
- In 1991, 45 percent of 3 to 5 year olds from low income families were enrolled in preschool programs, compared to 73 percent from high-income families.

Clearly, the general health and developmental status of a young child can have a tremendous impact on later performance in school. Poor health, injury, or disease affect the mental, academic, and social development of young children and may lead to speech, vision, and/or hearing problems, emotional difficulties, and other disabilities that affect learning. At school, the ability to concentrate is diminished when children are tired, hungry, under stress, or bothered by the disruptive behavior of others (Zill, 1990).

The Lives of Families

Family life also has changed. Many families today experience, at one time or another, the stress and indignities of contemporary life. Many children are neglected or shortchanged by families because of long-term disruptions and chaos in their daily lives. Concerns about basic needs of health, housing, employment, and food are a constant struggle for some families. Language and cultural differences create problems for others. Alcohol, drugs, and violence are either part of life or are an enemy many families confront daily. The workplace environment places constraints on how much time families can actually spend on their children's educational needs.

Parents often have limited time off to visit their children's school or attend school-related meetings.

The 1991 report of the National Association of State Boards of Education (*Caring Communities: Supporting Young Children and Families*) reveals that:

- Compared to 25-30 years ago, changes in family structure, neighborhoods, and work-related mobility have decreased the daily contact with extended families, neighbors, and community members.
- Nearly 100,000 preschool children live away from their natural families because of abuse or neglect; many others live in families that are homeless.
- Nearly two-thirds of all children younger than age 6 live in families headed by women who have low incomes.
- More than 60 percent of parents work full time or part time during school hours.

Time may be the most precious commodity that families need to support their children. Forty percent of parents across the country believe they are not devoting enough time to their children's education (Finney, 1993). The time a family spends with a child has a significant impact on learning both cognitive and social skills, and in keeping the child healthy. Studies show that what families do in the time they spend with children—whether reading, supervising home-learning activities and homework, or communicating high, but reasonable, expectations—is more important to student success than family income or social status (*Strong Families, Strong Schools*, U.S. Department of Education, 1994; Epstein, 1991; Stevenson & Baker, 1987; de Kanter, Ginsburg, & Milne, 1986; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Keith & Keith, 1993; Liontos, 1992; Walberg, n.d.).

Will these trends continue? The answers depend on many complex and interrelated factors outside the control of schools and families—access to quality health care for both families and children; employment opportunities; high-quality child care; national, state, and local funding for early childhood education; changes in welfare requirements, etc. Yet, both educators and families remain the most powerful influences that give young children the foundation and ongoing support they need to succeed academically and socially.

Section II

Setting the New Vision

> *"We must find new ways to give parents and families the support they need to help their children grow."*
> *Richard Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education*
> *Education Week, Oct. 5, 1994.*

Building Family and Education Partnerships

Given the statistics cited earlier, most educators will agree that young children need support beyond what the classroom teacher can provide. No other institution is so well positioned nor so dependent on the results as schools are when it comes to helping parents participate in their children's education. However, in order to bring about strong family/education partnerships, some changes will have to take place in the way families and educators interact. This will require: (1) a better understanding of each other's points of view about family involvement, (2) the acceptance of a new and expanded definition of family participation, and (3) better knowledge about a variety of strategies educators can use in the classroom and with families.

The remainder of this section is devoted to addressing those questions and providing information that can help educators and families develop thoughtful answers.

Key questions to consider are:

How can educators encourage families to increase their participation in their children's education?

How can educators help families provide the kinds of support that offer the best hope for young children?

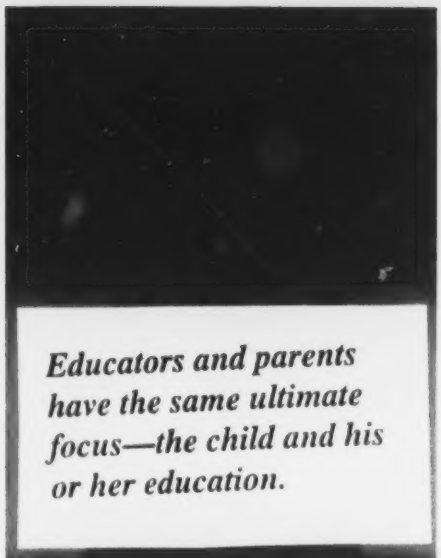
What strategies are the most promising?

How can families provide the best kind of home environment to support learning?

In what ways can parents contribute their input to schools?

What Do Families and Educators Want?

Research and surveys of parents and educators have shown that each group has very specific expectations of the other. A 1988 report from the Education Commission of the States suggests that these expectations do not always mesh, even though educators and parents have the same ultimate focus—the child and his or her education.



Educators and parents have the same ultimate focus—the child and his or her education.

Parents

Parents say they want to know what is going on in the school and how their children are doing. They want to know how the system works and how they can take part. They want to know what they can do at home to help their children. In particular, they want information about:

- What content their children are learning and how it is being taught
- What learning activities are provided at the school
- What the goals of the school and the teachers are
- What changes are being made in assessment, class size, after-school activities, etc. and why
- How they can spend more time at the school
- How to talk to teachers and other school officials
- How other parents feel about the school
- How they can help with at-home activities

Educators

Educators say they want parents to realize that educators are devoted to helping their children learn. They want them to know that parents have an important role to play. They want them to:

- Read and tutor their children at home
- Help motivate their children to be interested in learning
- Contact teachers about changes in the children's home environment that may affect school performance
- Provide more discipline at home
- Share responsibility for children's education
- Reinforce at home what is taught at school
- Attend school meetings
- Serve as volunteers
- Be willing to be consulted about changes in nonacademic school policies such as classroom management and after-school activities
- Be less involved in decisions about academic areas such as what subjects are taught, assessment, and class size

Despite some differences between parents and educators about what constitutes "appropriate family involvement," the research is solid. Children whose parents are involved in their education achieve at higher levels than those whose parents are not involved. Programs and activities with a strong component of family involvement produce students who perform better academically than those who have taken part in otherwise identical programs with less family involvement. A comprehensive review of 66 studies, reviews, program evaluations, reports, analyses, books (Henderson & Berla, 1994) and other studies (Henderson, 1987; Becher, 1984; Irvine, 1979; Gordon, 1978; Lazar, & Darlington, 1978) shows that:

- Children who are failing classes improve when parents are asked to help.

- Children whose families are in touch with the school score higher than those of similar aptitude and family background whose families are not in touch.
- Low-income and minority graduates of preschool programs with high involvement outperform their peers when they reach senior high school.
- Students at risk of failing or falling behind will outperform their peers if parents are given training in home teaching.
- In programs where low income parents are trained to work with their children, the students improved their language skills, test performance, and school behavior.

Given the data on student achievement when families are actively involved in their children's education, the education community—educators, school administrators, and school districts—can no longer consider family involvement an optional part of the education program.

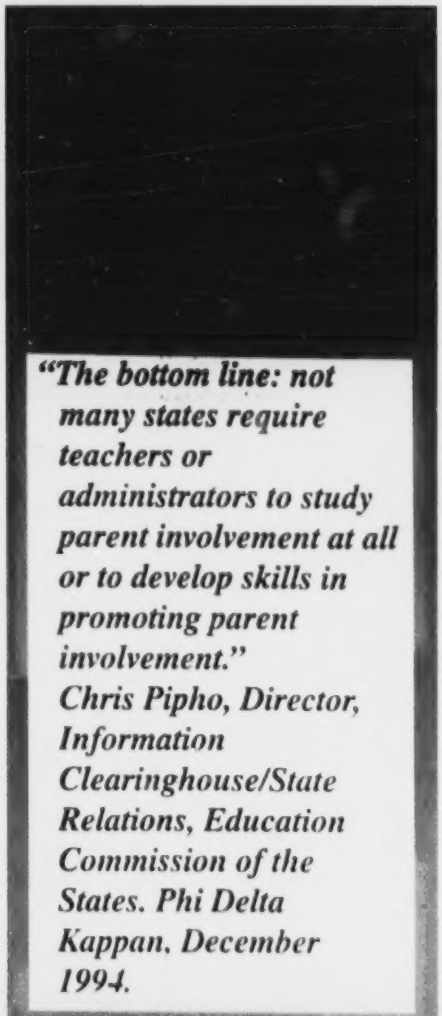
Both educators and families remain the most powerful influences that give young children the foundation and ongoing support they need.

What Does This Mean for Education?

Statistics on families and children often are used to justify the disinclination of many educators and schools to declare family involvement an essential part of any school's education program. The problems, in the minds of many, are insurmountable and not within the boundaries of schools. Nonetheless, more and more classroom teachers will have students (and will serve more families) who have a diversity of academic, health, and social needs.

The diversity among families and students presents challenges for teachers and other school personnel, and for families. The challenges require, in many instances, new ways to involve families, and new ways to develop school and family partnerships. Teachers may have to be better informed about the benefits of involving parents, the fact that all parents want to help their children succeed, and about specific practices that have been successful. Administrators may have to be better informed about the merits of allowing teachers to try different strategies, how to set up schoolwide family involvement expectations, and how to create schoolwide incentives that encourage family involvement. Parents may have to be better informed about their rights and responsibilities with respect to their children's education and how to play a more active role, both at home and in the school.

Three strategies hold promise for developing a stronger knowledge base among teachers, families, and administrators: (1) preservice and inservice professional development and training, (2) development and implementation of a schoolwide policy and plan for family participation, and (3) parental empowerment.



"The bottom line: not many states require teachers or administrators to study parent involvement at all or to develop skills in promoting parent involvement."
Chris Pipho, Director, Information Clearinghouse/State Relations, Education Commission of the States. Phi Delta Kappan, December 1994.

Educator Training and Inservice Professional Development

A recent report from the Council for Educational Development and Research (n.d.) states that "training teachers to involve parents is critical." Although teachers and administrators know the importance of involving families in their children's education, they often don't know how to do that. Some studies show that only half of the teachers surveyed think they can make a difference in the level of family involvement in education (Epstein, 1992).

In many teacher education and educational administration programs, parents are talked about as "problems to be dealt with," not as partners in education. Teachers and administrators rarely are given information about issues they confront daily such as diversities in families, cultures, and languages. Nor are they informed about promising practices and programs that help bridge the perceived gaps between educators and families (Epstein, 1992).

The Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs released findings in 1994 which indicate that not many states require either teachers or administrators to study parent involvement in teacher training programs (Radcliffe, Malone, & Nathan, 1994). For example:

- Seven states require principals or central office administrators to study parent involvement or to become proficient in promoting parent involvement.
- Fourteen states specifically require elementary teachers to study or become competent in this area.
- Twenty states require parent involvement training for educators preparing to work in early childhood education.
- Fifteen states require most or all teachers to study or develop abilities in parent involvement.

A new focus on training, whether preservice preparation or inservice professional development, must be emphasized. This training must give educators a firm knowledge base about increasing family participation and understanding families' talents and cultures. Families and educators must learn how to communicate with each other in spite of difficulties that arise over socioeconomic status, ethnicity, language, education, and other perceived barriers.

A 1994 study conducted by the Harvard Family Research Project suggests that teacher education programs include a parent involvement component that reflects skills teachers need in working with parents (Shartrand, Krieder, & Erickson-Warfield, 1994). Seven categories of courses (or knowledge areas) were seen as necessary:

- General knowledge that promotes skills in and positive attitudes toward involving parents
- General knowledge that promotes an awareness of and respect for cultural and lifestyle beliefs
- Home-school communication strategies for improving communication between home and school partners
- Strategies on how to involve parents in their children's learning outside of school
- Strategies on how to involve parents in helping the school (in and out of the classroom)
- How schools can support families' needs (social, educational, and basic needs)
- How to support and involve families in decision-making types of roles in the school

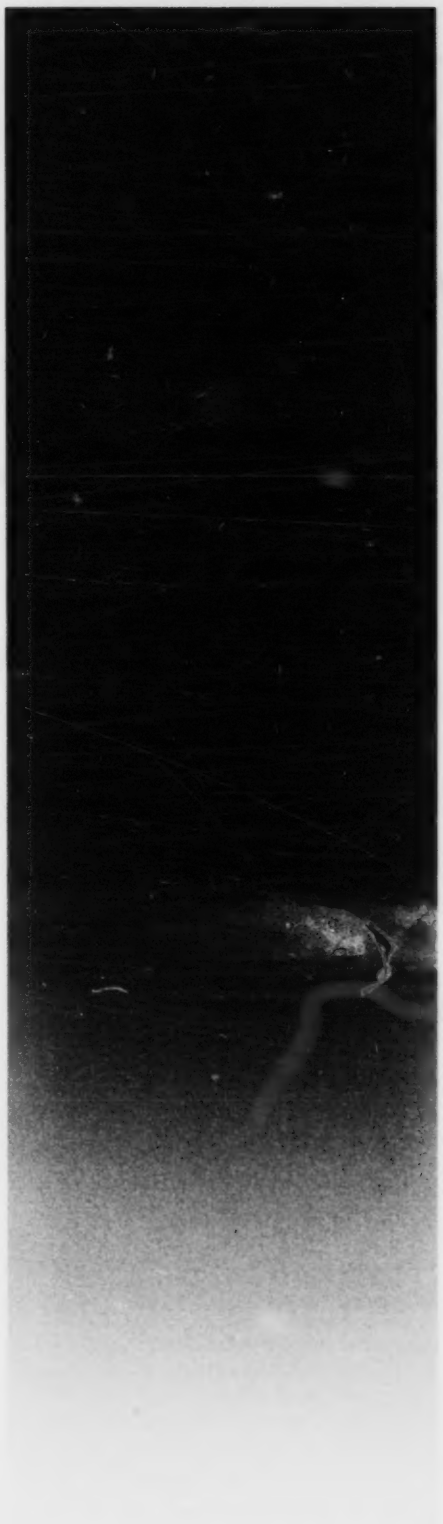
In addition to including this component in the teacher training programs, individual schools need to target staff development resources to provide training to current staff members.

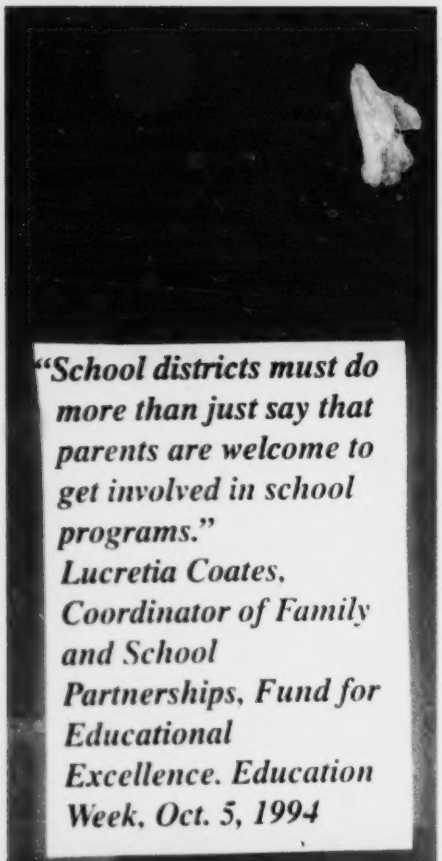
Development of Schoolwide Policy of Family Participation

Heather Weiss (1994), director of the Harvard Family Research Project, comments that previously disconnected pieces of educational reform that have implications for parent involvement must be linked together and integrated into each school's improvement plan. Moreover, these pieces "must reinforce a holistic, schoolwide approach to parent involvement."

Various approaches to parent involvement, such as site-based management, parent education, school-linked health and social services, home-school communications, strategies that help parents help their children at home, and other parent outreach programs, have a greater potential for impact if they are seen as part of the school structure, not as separate programs. In many schools, each component has a life, staff, and resources of its own. Weiss (1994) states that school-linked health and social services seldom are part of regular home/school communications strategies. For example, when teachers encourage families to tutor their children at home, they may not have all of the information about family circumstances such as health, lifestyle, literacy, or language that staff in other parent outreach programs may have.

Family involvement is most effective when it is well planned and comprehensive (Gordon, 1978; Henderson, 1988). Family involvement activities must be included in annual school improvement plans, policies, and the budget. The activities should incorporate staff development, hiring practices, desired outcomes for parent involvement, and ongoing evaluation of all parent involvement activities as a whole.





"School districts must do more than just say that parents are welcome to get involved in school programs."
Lucretia Coates, Coordinator of Family and School Partnerships, Fund for Educational Excellence. Education Week, Oct. 5, 1994

Additionally, whether formal or informal, families should play a key role in major curriculum and instructional decisions, school structure and governance, fiscal decisions, and staff development needs.

The following diagram provides a model that could be useful for school staff and families in jointly developing a schoolwide family participation strategy.

Family Participation Model

The Family Participation Model is offered as a tool for viewing family involvement in education as an integral part of a comprehensive schoolwide plan rather than a separate program. The model outlines a child-focused approach, and suggests that when the school and family work hand-in-hand and communicate effectively, the child is the beneficiary. Although the expectations of families and schools may differ, and the supports they provide for children may vary, the results often are the same–success for a child.

The model recommends parallel actions on the part of school personnel and family members, but with continued communication as the link.

Communication

Keeping the lines of communication open between home and school is extremely important. Whether initiated by the school or the family, communication must be ongoing, direct, and focused on the needs of the child. Some suggestions for improving communication include:

- Meetings
- Conferences
- Workshops
- Phone Calls
- Newsletters
- Written Notes

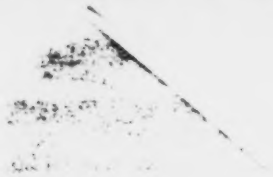
Outcomes

The success of a child is enhanced as schools and families work together in a collaborative approach. Through a schoolwide family participation program, the school benefits, the family benefits, and, most importantly, the child benefits.

Family Empowerment

One goal of family participation is to increase the numbers of families who are actively involved in their children's education. For many families, this means improving parents' knowledge about child development, parenting skills, parent-child interaction, and parent-teacher interaction (Epstein, 1992). It also means giving all parents

Success for a Child



Communication

Surveying the staff, community, and school leadership (SAC, PTA, Title 1 Committe)

Written Notes

Find your family strenghts and abilities

Construct a family involvement team for mentoring and monitoring

Newsletters

Assess educational concerns

Help leadership synthesize the results into a schoolwide action plan

Phone Calls

Make a list of educational goals

Operationalize the plan

Workshops

Initiate a plan of action

Observe and evaluate as the plan is implemented

Conferences

Let the school know your needs and abilities

Link to outside resources

Meetings

Yearn to be a part of your child's school life

"Parents will need to own the task."
James Comer, Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry at Yale Child Study Center and Associate Dean at Yale School of Medicine. Education Week, Oct. 5, 1994.

meaningful opportunities to participate in decisions made on behalf of their children. Schools must provide appropriate and ongoing information about children's progress and the educational program of the school so that parents can make better decisions.

Parents' level and quality of involvement are linked directly to specific school practices. When schools develop strong partnership programs, parents are more supportive at home and in the school. Parents who lack knowledge about school programs and practices do not always lack interest in their children's education; rather, schools may have failed to devise appropriate strategies for involving them (Fruchter, Galletta, & White, 1993).

At one end of the program spectrum lies efforts to give families the skills, knowledge, and training needed to support their children's growth and development in the home. Programs such as Parents As Teachers (P.A.T.) in Missouri and the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (H.I.P.P.Y.) are good examples. Both are long-term efforts to work directly with parents, with a specific emphasis on home visits and involving parents in learning activities in the home.

Somewhere in the middle are efforts that support parent-teacher partnerships both in the school and the home, and focus more prominently on academic development. Success for All and MegaSkills are examples of this type of program. Success for All is a school-based, achievement-oriented program that works with families, teachers, and students. The MegaSkills program provides workshops for both parents and teachers that reinforce the learning experiences of the child at home and in the school.

At the other end of the spectrum is James Comer's School Development Program, which is designed for substantial parent involvement in academics, staff development, and school climate. Parents also develop workshops for themselves about how to help their children in school—tutoring, helping teachers plan and implement the social calendar, and serving as classroom assistants (Flaxman & Inger, 1991).

A New Vision of Family Participation

As we have seen, expectations for family participation in education will need to be different in the future. Statistics on children and their families, unmet educator training needs, and data that show the power of family involvement are evidence that educators and families need to take on new roles and responsibilities with respect to children's educational development. Real and meaningful family participation calls for parents and educators working together

across lines of power, class, race, gender, status, and politics (Fine, 1993). Thus, a new vision for school and family partnerships must include a new definition of the family's role:

- Families are no longer just passive recipients of information about their children's education. Today's families are represented on educational planning teams as important partners.
- Families are an integral part of their children's school life, sharing and receiving information, resources, and training.
- Decisions about educational services are made based on what families say they need and want.
- Families have a role in policy decisions that affect their children's education and care.
- Families are knowledgeable about the needs of their children and share responsibility for decision-making with educators.
- Today's families have access to and seek information about services they need.
- The home culture and language of the family is known, respected, and appreciated by educators.
- Today's families are comfortable about initiating communication with the school.
- Families are welcomed in schools and given guidance about how they can help at school and in the home.
- Today's families support and assist educators as partners in their children's education.
- Families are continuously informed about changes in curriculum, grading, class schedules, and other school policies, and have the opportunity to help shape those changes.

In order to make this new vision a reality, educators have a wealth of strategies available to them. Important in any list of strategies is knowing which strategies or activities are relevant to the children and families served and what you are attempting to accomplish. Some families want help with at-home learning activities, other families want more information from the school, while still others want to be more involved in the operational aspects of the school. (Section IV describes some methods and techniques educators can use to elicit the needs and desires of the families they serve.)

Flaxman and Inger (1991) suggest that there are a few principles that apply when choosing among various family involvement programs and strategies:

- Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, well planned, and long lasting.
- Parent involvement should be developmental and preventive, an integral part of a school improvement strategy, rather than a remedial intervention.

Understanding that schools can't do it all presents the most compelling argument for defining a new kind of partnership between educators and families.

- Parents do not have to be formally educated to help themselves and their children.
- Children from low-income and minority families have the most to gain when schools involve their family.

Strategies Educators Can Use

Some of the most comprehensive research on family involvement in education comes from Joyce Epstein. Epstein (1992) argues that the main reason for home/school partnerships is a joint focus on a child's learning, development, and success. Students are not passive. When schools and families work in partnership, students can see that education is important. In the two environments in which they spend most of their time—home and school—they perceive that their families and teachers are investing time and resources to help them succeed. The student's work is legitimized by this mutual support (Epstein, 1992).

In her work, Epstein outlines five types of family involvement that contribute to the development of a joint partnership between families and schools. These five types of involvement help schools and families fulfill their shared responsibilities for children's learning. They are:

1. Basic obligations of families
2. Basic obligations of schools
3. Family involvement at school
4. Involvement in learning activities at home
5. Involvement in decision making, governance, and advocacy

A sixth type of involvement adds the community as a sphere of influence: collaboration and exchanges with the community. Although Epstein's sixth type of family involvement is important, it is outside the focus of this report and will be explored in a subsequent publication addressing business and community involvement. (For those who are interested, please refer to cited Epstein articles in the Bibliography).

Under each of the five sections, strategies and activities are presented to offer ideas for educators interested in developing partnership relationships with families. Each section (or type of involvement) provides a sample of benefits to parents, teachers, and students (Epstein, 1995).

Type 1: Basic Obligation of Families

Families are responsible for providing for their children's health and safety, developing parenting skills, engaging in child-rearing practices

that prepare children for school, and building positive home conditions that support school learning and behavior. Schools help families develop the knowledge and skills they need to understand their children through workshops and other forms of education and information.

What Are Some Strategies?

- Provide an in-school resource center for parents who have social services, health, or other basic needs.
- Offer ongoing workshops on parenting skills, drawing on the expertise of health care providers, counselors, child care providers, and other parents.
- Offer classes, taught by a school nurse or others, on children's health care concerns. Involve family members as experts.
- Prepare videos on child care issues for parents to view at home. Feature real-life examples from your community. Include a resource list of services that families can access.
- Develop a survey for parents to assess their parenting skill needs, then develop workshops to address those needs, tapping parent expertise.
- Offer classes in preparing for the Test of General Educational Development (GED) or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Ensure that all communication is in the language of families served.

What Are the Benefits?

- **For Parents:**
  Self-confidence and knowledge about parenting
  Knowledge of child development and child care issues
  Understanding of the home as a learning environment
- **For Students:**
  Security, safety, and health
  Respect for the family
  Awareness of the importance of education and school
- **For Teachers:**
  Understanding and appreciation of family cultures, goals, talents, needs

Type 2: Basic Obligation of Schools

Schools are responsible for communicating with families about school programs and children's progress. This includes notices, phone calls, home visits, report cards, and parent/teacher workshops. Other communications include information to help families select educational programs, special programs, and activities. Schools vary the form and frequency of communication so that it is easily understood and gives ongoing information about students, school events, and upcoming changes at the school. Schools strengthen partnerships by encouraging two-way communication.

"In the early years– preschool and elementary grades– most families are not informed or involved in important ways that establish and strengthen children's cognitive, personal, and social develpment."
Joyce Epstein, researcher, Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning at Johns Hopkins University, School and Family Partnerships, 1992.

What Are Some Strategies?

- Develop a formal family outreach plan for your entire school.
- Hold regular parent/teacher/student conferences with every parent.
- During conferences, discuss strengths and weaknesses in basic skills, review samples of work, and jointly develop goals for the student.
- Send home a checklist, questionnaire, or self-assessment prior to conferences to help families prepare for the conference.
- Make regular home visits to families with preschool children. Use volunteers or others who know the community as home visitors.
- Have teachers phone parents or write letters to introduce themselves.
- Deliver welcome packets to every family before each new school year.
- Conduct meetings and conferences at times that accommodate family schedules. Consider meeting in the community. Provide child care.
- Establish bilingual hotlines for families.
- Send home weekly or monthly folders of student work. Elicit comments from families.
- Encourage families to visit the school at all times.
- Announce school-related meetings far enough in advance so families can adjust their schedules. Survey the community to determine good times for meetings. Vary the schedule to accommodate the needs of families.
- Showcase students' achievements at times when families can participate.

What Are the Benefits?

- **For Parents:**
  Understanding school programs and practices
  Ongoing interaction with the teacher
  Better monitoring of a child's progress
- **For Students:**
  Better decisions about academic needs and programs
- **For Teachers:**
  A common base of understanding for discussing a student's progress and needs.

Type 3: Parent Involvement at School

Families and other volunteers who help teachers, administrators, and children in classrooms or in other areas of the school are involved, as are families who come to school to support student performances, sports, or other events. Schools improve and vary schedules so that more families are able to participate in a variety of ways. Schools recruit and help train volunteers so they can provide meaningful support to educators, students, and school improvement efforts.

What Are Some Strategies?

- Survey parents to find out how they would like to be involved.
- Recruit parent volunteers to read to students in the school or to listen to them read.
- Encourage parents to assist with activities such as field trips and to supervise after-school programs.
- Ask parents to assist with classroom activities such as art, science, and special student productions such as plays and musicals.
- Ensure that every event is advertised and a notice is sent to all families encouraging them to attend.
- Recruit and assist parents to become lunchroom monitors, library aides, field trip chaperones, tutors, and clerical assistants.
- Use parent volunteers to help with bilingual needs, such as compiling information about the school for other parents who are in a language minority.
- Recruit parents to train all volunteers.
- Recruit volunteers who understand the culture of ethnic groups within the school to help the school meet the needs of these groups.

What Are the Benefits?

- **For Parents:**
  Understanding of teacher's job and school programs
  Familiarity with teachers
  Comfort in interactions with school and teachers
- **For Students:**
  Opportunities to see parents and teachers as adults who share responsibility for their success
  Added benefits such as special tutoring
- **For Teachers:**
  Better awareness of parent interest and willingness to help
  Readiness to try programs that involve families in many ways
  Opportunities to help students who need additional attention

Type 4: Involvement in Learning Activities at Home

Teachers encourage parents to monitor and assist their own children at home. Teachers give parents direction on ways to interact with their children in learning activities at home that are coordinated with classwork or that enrich learning. Schools enable families to better understand how to help their children at home by providing information on academic and other skills required of students to pass a grade, excel in a particular subject, or complete homework assignments.

What Are Some Strategies?

- Ask parents to read to their children or listen to them read every day.
- Ask parents to watch a television show with their children and discuss it afterward.

Teachers give parents direction on ways to interact with their children in learning activities at home that are coordinated with classwork or that enrich learning

- Provide information and tips on how to help with learning in the home. Tailor the tips to provide specific information about the skills and subject matter, such as basic reading and computation skills, listening skills, and music and arts appreciation. Incorporate ideas from parents and students about what works for them.
- Create a handbook of practical, everyday learning activities such as helping with grocery lists, taking nature walks in parks, or talking about daily events or news stories on television.
- Send home ideas for family games or activities related to school work.
- Develop contracts among teachers, parents, and student with agreements on roles and responsibilities.
- Create a list of home phone numbers so you can contact families about homework needs.

What Are the Benefits?

- **For Parents:**
  Interaction with child's education at home
- **For Students:**
  Enhanced self-concept of self as learner
  Higher skills achievement
  Support and encouragement of learning activities at home
- **For Teachers:**
  Respect for parent's time
  Better design of at-home activities
  Reduced time spent on remediation activities

Type 5: Involvement in Governance, Decision-Making and Advocacy

Parents serve in participatory roles in Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) or Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO), advisory councils, school site management teams, Title 1 programs, or other school committees. Parents also may become activists in independent community groups. Schools support parents by helping them learn decision making and communication skills so they can communicate with all the families they represent. Schools include parents as true contributors to school decisions, and provide information to community advocacy groups so they can knowledgeably address issues of student learning and school improvement.

What Are Some Strategies?

- Organize a parent advisory committee so parents can contribute ideas and suggestions about their children's education and the school's education program.
- Form parent advisory groups to solicit input when contemplating changes in curriculum or instruction. Hold ongoing meetings with parents to discuss the changes.

- Provide training for parents who serve on formal decision-making or site-based councils. The training should mirror the particular decisions parents will be involved in such as budget, governance and school management, selection of teachers and other personnel, etc.
- Develop (with families) a written policy to ensure that both teachers and parents have an understanding of the extent to which parents have a real influence on school policy, programs, and decision making. Distribute this document to every family, all school personnel, and the local school board.

What Are the Benefits?

- **For Parents:**
  Input to practices and policies that affect the child's education
  Feeling of control over the environment
  Equal-status interaction with educators regarding needs of their children
- **For Students:**
  Improved policies reflecting their needs
  Protected rights
- **For Teachers:**
  Equal-status interaction with parents
  Awareness of family perspectives on education issues

Schools with comprehensive family participation encompassing each of these five types of involvement will have parents who communicate more effectively with the school, become productive volunteers, contribute to decisions that affect the school and their children, and take responsibility at home to support and motivate learning (Epstein, 1992).

The next section provides information about a variety of family participation programs being implemented around the country. As you read about these programs, think about your own community and the children you serve. Consider how you might start a family participation program in your school or enhance the work you do with families.

Section III

Successful Programs and Practices

There are a number of effective family participation programs in place across the nation today. Many of them have been in place for years, and their successes are well documented. Others are new ideas rising from a need to find innovative solutions to old problems. Some of the best ideas are spawned from observing the work of others. Section III describes some of the efforts that are working to join parents, educators, and children in a partnership of learning. These programs or practices include examples of family involvement strategies drawn from research literature, and from innovative programs that have been successful in increasing family involvement and student achievement.

This section consists of five parts:

- A matrix illustrating a list of national programs that focus on family participation in education. Components of each program are identified within the matrix. (See Section IV for contact information).
- A description of what a Sharing Success Program is and how specific programs in this document were selected.
- A discussion of key elements and activities that must be considered when replicating a family involvement program.
- Descriptions of seven successful family participation programs that serve students and their families from prekindergarten through third grade, and local implementation sites within the SERVE region (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina).
- Descriptions of five grassroots programs that have been successful in addressing the needs of children and families within their communities.

All programs were selected from a large pool of well-documented, excellent programs focused on family participation. Neither the highlighted programs nor the programs listed within the matrix

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Summary of Program Services

	Ages	Grades	Special Needs	Limited English Proficiency	Academic Curriculum	Developmental Needs
Early Intervention for School Success*		K			●	●
Enriching a Child's Literacy Environment (ECLE)*	6 months–3 Years		●	●		●
Family Intergenerational Literacy Model (FILM)*	0–5			●		●
FAMILY MATH		K–8		●	●	●
Family Oriented Structures Preschool Activity (FOSPS)*	4					●
High/Scope Pre-K to 3 Curriculum*	4	K–3	●	●	●	●
HIPPY	3–5					●
KITE*		K			●	●
League of Schools Reaching Out		K–12	●		●	
Mega-Skills		K–8		●	●	
MELD	0–5		●	●		●
Mother/Child Home Program*	17 months–4 years		●			●
National Center for Family Literacy*	3–4		●	●		●
On the Way to Success in Reading & Writing with Early Prevention of School Failure*	4–7		●	●	●	●
Parents As Teachers (PAT)*	0–4		●			●
Programming for Early Education of Children with Diabilities (PEECH)*	3–5		●		●	●
P.I.A.G.E.T.*	1–8		●	●	●	●
Portage Project*	0–6		●	●		●
School Development Program (Comer)		K–12	●		●	●
Search and Teach*		K–1	●		●	●
Success for All		preK–5	●		●	

1- Special Needs - includes developmentally delayed and "at- risk" populations.
2- Academic Curriculum - promotes basic academic skills such as reading and math.
3- Developmental Needs - programmatic content based on developmental characteristics of children.
4- Parent /Child Interaction - parent/child interaction incorporated into the program content.

Parent/Child Interaction [4]	Parent Workshops [5]	Parent Materials [6]	Home Visits	Community Collaboration	Certified Trainer	Training Time Required (Days)	Program Follow-Up
		●			●	2	●
●	●				●	2+	●
●	●	●	●	●	●	5	●
●	●	●		●	●	2	
●	●	●	●	●	●	2–3	
●	●		●		●	3+	●
●	●	●	●		●		●
		●			●	1	
●	●		●	●			
●	●	●		●	●	2	
●	●	●	●	●	●	5	●
●		●	●	●	●	3+	●
●	●			●	●	24–27 Hours	●
●		●			●	2	●
●	●	●	●	●	●	3+	●
●	●	●		●	●	2+	●
		●	●		●	2	●
●			●	●	●	3+	
●			●	●	●		
					●		
				●	●	3	●

5- Parent Workshops - includes family support groups, workshops focusing on personal growth, parenting skills, and developmental needs of children.

6- Parent Materials - may include parent handbook, parent information, or activity kits to be used with child.

** Denotes family participation programs that are validated by the National Diffusion Network (NDN)*

SERVE's Sharing Success Program for Family Participation

SERVE conducts a Sharing Success Program for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, recognizing, and disseminating information about effective practices in education. The SERVE Sharing Success Program for Family Participation recognizes and shares successful programs or practices in the area of family involvement. Through sharing information about these programs or practices, SERVE hopes to encourage their use and implementation by others.

Family participation programs or practices have been identified and selected through a process in which individuals, agencies, or associations provided descriptions of programs or practices they felt were effective. In addition, information was collected from a search of studies, research, and electronic clearinghouses, as well as conversations with researchers and educators at local, state, and national levels. Criteria included:

- Programs serving children ages 3 through 8
- Programs with a high level of family-teacher-community involvement
- Literature- or research-based programs
- Sites in the SERVE region
- Available effectiveness data
- Some element of innovation in response to an identified need

Following selection, SERVE staff members conducted an on-site visit to verify the implementation, observe the program in action, and document its effectiveness.

All contact people from the programs featured here have agreed to be available for visits, or to provide information about their programs upon request.

The programs recognized in this section are located in the SERVE six-state region. Some are validated through the National Diffusion Network (NDN), a nationwide system created in 1974 to improve education. Others have been documented as effective in the literature related to parent involvement. In addition, they have been verified through SERVE's Sharing Success Program.

Replicating a Family Participation Program

Before implementing a program in a local school district or school site, it is important to remember that replicating a family participation program from the research site to a school will take considerable planning by

those involved, and considerable support from the program trainer (Alving, 1993). First, decide what you hope to accomplish with your family participation program. One way of doing this would be to conduct a needs assessment of various members of your school community such as parents, students, and school personnel. You will want to ask questions such as:

- What is the economic, ethnic, and language makeup of this school? Are there any special populations of students (e.g., bilingual, special education) being served?
- How are families currently invited to participate in the school? What are some ways to enhance these activities?
- Have families been provided with information on what to do at home to help with their children's education?
- What can be done to facilitate communication between home and school?
- How welcome do parents feel at school? What could be done to make parents feel more welcome?

Once this information has been gathered, outline specific goals. These goals will help you choose which program you want to replicate (Alving, 1993).

Key Elements to Remember

According to Alving (1993), there are certain key elements a program should contain that make it more likely that parents will come, that teachers will support the effort, and that the work will be sustained over time. These elements are:

- The program is comprehensive in scope,
- It encourages collaboration among other programs and departments (e.g., social and health services),
- The program is adaptable,
- The program will provide ongoing training and technical assistance, and
- The program will include an evaluation component.

Not all programs will have these characteristics. Carefully examine each program to see if it contains all the elements you are looking for and is the one most likely to meet the goals you have established.

FAMILY MATH

Contact: Lawrence Hall of Science
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720-5200
(510) 642-1823

FAMILY MATH is designed to give parents the tools to make math more fun, interesting, and challenging to children.

FAMILY MATH is a program that focuses on helping parents become more effective partners in their children's mathematics learning. In FAMILY MATH classes, parents are able to learn methods and activities which encourage children's interest in math and help children develop basic skills and problem-solving abilities at home. FAMILY MATH is designed to give parents the tools to make math more fun, interesting, and challenging to children.

FAMILY MATH is one of the EQUALS programs at the Lawrence Hall of Science. EQUALS programs promote equity in mathematics education for all learners.

A typical FAMILY MATH course would include six to eight sessions, each lasting one to two hours. Courses are usually taught in grouped grade levels such as K-3, 4-6, or 6-8, although this may vary depending on the teacher or families. Topics in the FAMILY MATH courses include: geometry, probability and statistics, measurement, estimation, calculators, computers, logical thinking, and careers. Courses are designed to give parents and children opportunities to develop problem-solving skills and to build an understanding of mathematics with "hands-on" materials. Materials for each course are based on the particular school mathematics program for those grade levels. Activities are designed to supplement the school curriculum, and parents are encouraged to talk about their children's math programs with their teachers.

Local Implementation Site

North Aiken Elementary School
Contact: *Shirley Makin, Teacher or*
Charles Leopold, Principal
123 Rutland Drive, NW
Aiken, SC 29801

Coordinated By: *Gwen Johnson, Program Director*
Ruth Patrick Science Education Center
University of South Carolina—Aiken
171 University Parkway
Aiken, SC 29801
(803) 648-6851

The South Carolina Department of Education has created 13 math and science hubs throughout the state to assist in the

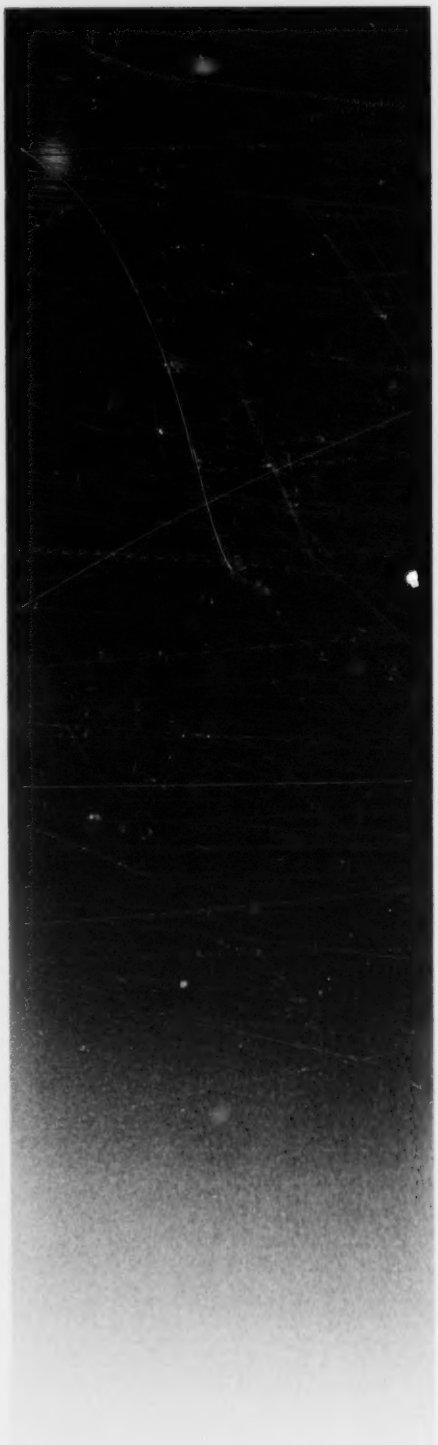
teaching of math and science in the public schools. These hubs coordinate teacher training, and in many cases, short programs for children. In an effort to promote mathematics and science in the schools, the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center on the campus of The University of South Carolina—Aiken, trains staff to use FAMILY MATH and other methods in the classroom. Through the help of the center, teachers at North Aiken Elementary School developed a FAMILY MATH Program with the goal of involving families in their children's education.

North Aiken Elementary, located in Aiken, South Carolina, serves a minority population in this largely industrial city of approximately 50,000. One of the highlights of the FAMILY MATH program at North Aiken Elementary School is the Family Extravaganzas. Families attend special theme nights at the school and participate in learning activities together. Most recently the school hosted "Around the World in 80 Minutes," "Frog Festival," and "Under the Big Top." Programs are occasionally accompanied by a dinner sponsored by a corporate partner.

Teachers model activities and techniques that can be used outside of the classroom and send families home with additional learning activities to extend the theme of the evening. Teachers often supplement daily lessons with these activities, motivating additional students to attend.

Teachers report that the program has had wonderful results. Not only are parents becoming more involved in the school's programs, but teachers are changing their practices in the classroom and across the curriculum to meet the children's and families' needs in reading, science, and social studies. A bonus has been an increase in standardized test scores in mathematics. The cost of implementing the programs includes copying and initial supplies such as beans, paper clips, etc. Many of these items can be donated by the community.

The Ruth Patrick Science Center provides inservice training and has purchased nonconsumable supplies that can be checked out by teachers and schools. This has made the program easier to implement and more affordable. Training for teacher trainers was provided by the State of South Carolina. The State Department of Education has also provided follow-up by a national trainer.



High/Scope PreK–3 Curriculum

Contact: A. Clay Shouse
600 North River Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
(313) 485-2000

The High/Scope approach views children as active learners who learn best when they themselves are allowed to plan, select, carry out, and reflect on activities within a structured environment Through active learning, young children construct knowledge that helps them make sense of their world. Goals of the program are to develop children's abilities to speak; dramatize and graphically represent their experiences, and communicate these experiences to others; make decisions about what to do and how to do it; plan how they will use their time and energy; and apply newly acquired reasoning capacity. The teacher's role is to support the children's decisions and encourage them to extend learning beyond the original plan. Teachers rely on a basic room arrangement and daily routine designed to stimulate and support active learning.

High/Scope recognizes that families have an important role to play in young children's development. The ingredients of active learning—language from children, choice, materials, manipulation, and support from adults—not only guide High/Scope's approach to children, but also to families. High/Scope advocates four strategies for supporting family involvement:

1. Knowing yourself and your family's roots, beliefs, and attitudes. To better understand the children they serve, High/Scope encourages teachers to learn about themselves and try to understand what influences their perceptions of other families.
2. Learning from children and families about their styles and traditions. To learn more about children's families, teachers are encouraged to conduct home visits, participate in community life, observe children daily, and reach out to families through notes, newsletters, and family gatherings.
3. Creating positive relationships between yourself and others. High/Scope encourages teachers to build positive relationships with children and families by establishing trust, communicating acceptance, and focusing on strengths.
4. Anticipating excellence from each child. To help children excel, High/Scope asks teachers to avoid labeling or stereotyping children and families, regard each child as competent, and assume that he or she will succeed.

High/Scope stresses the importance of the home-school relationship. Good relationships between parents and the school set the stage for successful family involvement programs.

Local Implementation Site

Choctaw High/Scope Early Childhood Education Program

Contact: *Pam Dalme, Director of Schools, or*
DeLaura Saunders, Head Start Director
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
P.O. Box 6010
Philadelphia, MS 39350
(601) 656-5251

The Choctaw Indian Reservation consists of 22,000 acres of trust land located in rural eastern Mississippi. Over 90 percent of tribal members are Choctaw, and 95 percent of the families speak the Choctaw language in their homes. Historically, educational and economic isolation caused high unemployment, low educational attainment, and a high instance of health and social problems. The Choctaw tribe recognized the need to intervene in this cycle in order to ensure success for their children and families. They learned that the High/Scope model stressed active learning, and recognized that families played an important role in children's development. They read that knowing yourself, your family roots, beliefs, attitudes, and traditions were critical elements of the High/Scope philosophy.

In 1990, the Choctaw Tribal Schools Department of Education adopted the High/Scope curriculum model to serve their infant/toddler, preschool, and kindergarten through third grade programs, and chose the Conehatta community as the pilot site. The teachers at Conehatta worked with the High/Scope consultants over a three-year period to incorporate elements of Choctaw traditions and language into the daily routine. Today, students participate in cultural lessons, using Choctaw stories, dance, beading, cooking, and basket weaving. Home visitors work with families, providing workshops and building positive home-school relationships.

Today, other schools in the Tribal system are implementing the philosophies and programming techniques of High/Scope. Student attendance has increased, and standardized test results indicate that children are experiencing greater success. The schools and families are working together to improve the opportunities for success of their children.

HIPPY

(Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters)

Contact: HIPPY USA
c/o Teachers College, Box 113
525 W. 120th Street
New York, NY 10027
(212) 678-3500

The curriculum is primarily cognitive based, focusing on language development, problem solving, and discrimination skills.

The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a home-based, early intervention program that helps parents learn how to prepare their children for success in school and later in life. The program is designed specifically for parents who may not feel confident in their own abilities to teach their children. In the United States, HIPPY is a two- to three-year program for parents with children ages 3, 4, and 5.

Every other week paraprofessionals, who also are participants in the program, make home visits to role play HIPPY activities with parents. During these visits, paraprofessionals use role playing as the method of instruction for training parents. For example, the paraprofessional may pretend to be the mother, while the real mother pretends to be the child. Together, they work through packets of prepared lessons and storybooks. Then the mothers are ready to work with their children. HIPPY activities are written in a structured format to ensure that they will be easy and fun for parents to implement. The curriculum is primarily cognitive based, focusing on language development, problem solving, and discrimination skills.

HIPPY encourages parents to spend at least 15-20 minutes a day, five days a week, doing program activities with their children. On alternating weeks, group meetings are held. During group meetings, paraprofessionals and parents role play the week's activities, and an enrichment activity is offered, including issues on parenting and family life. Group meetings also address parents' interests in improving their own situation through further education and training.

Costs for implementing HIPPY are approximately $1,000 to $1,500 per child, per year over two years. Costs include staff salaries (the largest and most variable component); curriculum materials; and fees for training and technical assistance, program development, and license and affiliation. While funding often is the greatest obstacle to starting and maintaining a HIPPY program, programs have been successful in obtaining funding from a variety of sources, including early childhood initiatives such as Title I (Chapter I), Even Start, Head Start, job training initiatives, public housing initiatives, an assortment of prevention and early intervention programs (e.g., child abuse prevention, teen pregnancy

prevention, crime prevention), and foundations, businesses, and civic organizations.

Local Implementation Site

Dougherty County Pre-Kindergarten Program

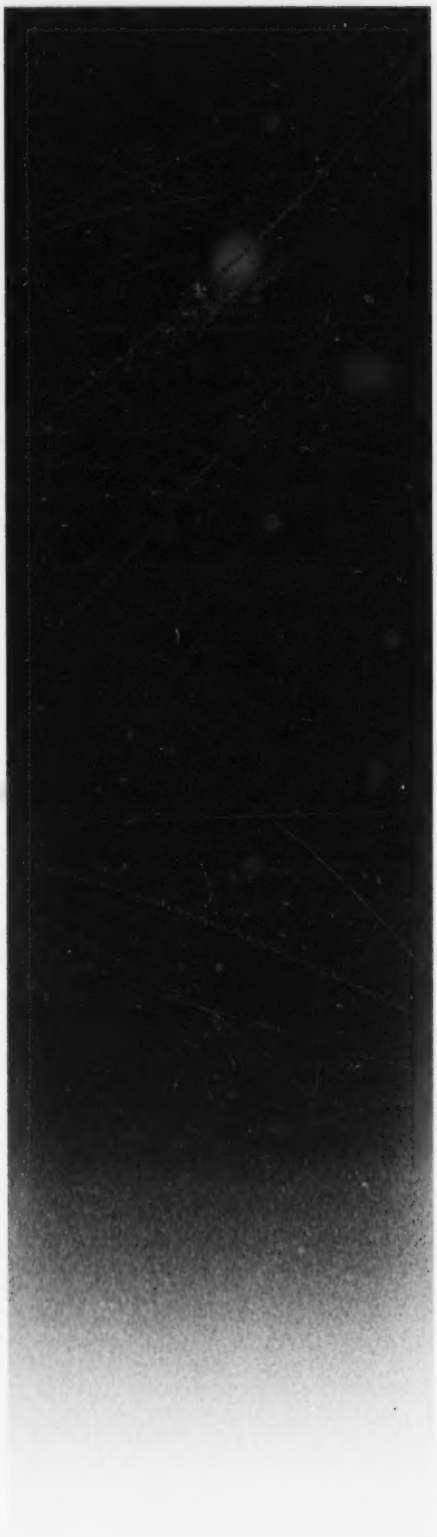
Contact: *Suzanne Glover*
Bethel Site, HIPPY
P.O. Box 1470
Albany, GA
(912) 431-1317

During the summer of 1994, Albany experienced a terrible flood that displaced hundreds of families and ruined many homes, schools, and offices. Space that was already scarce became even more difficult to find. Although many of Albany's families were in desperate need of help, services were not always available. The Dougherty County Pre-Kindergarten Program recognized the importance of reaching out to these families and providing services to as many children as possible. Because of the limited amount of classroom space and the need to reach more children, Dougherty County Pre-Kindergarten Program implemented HIPPY.

Families who receive HIPPY services are served by two paraprofessionals who work with the families to implement the curriculum. In addition, there is a family service coordinator who plans the parent meetings, oversees the day-to-day operation of the site and coordinates community services for the families. In its first year, the HIPPY program was able to reach 30 children and their families. However, in an effort to reach those most in need, the community responded by making a facility available in a housing complex. This allowed children who already were receiving HIPPY services to be provided with pre-K services. Children from other areas in Albany who were receiving HIPPY services were served at an additional site.

This allowed them to receive the benefits of both pre-K and HIPPY. This year, the program has expanded to reach 36, 4 year olds and to complete the preschool experience of the original 30, 5 year olds.

According to Suzanne Glover, Family Services Coordinator, meeting with the families on a weekly basis and having a facility available within the housing complex creates a greater sense of community. This process empowers families to see themselves as their children's first teachers and provides them with the knowledge of where they can turn in time of need.



Mother/Child Home Program (MCHP)

Contact: Phyllis Levenstein, Director
National Center for Mother-Child Home Program
3268 Island Road
Wantagh, NY 11793
(516) 785-7077

The Mother-Child Home Program (MCHP) is an early childhood/parent education method designed to promote parents' verbal interaction with their children and to prevent children's later school problems. The theory behind the Mother-Child Home Program is that a child's cognitive and social-emotional development can be stimulated through the playful interactions that occur between parent and child in an environment rich with high-quality toys and books.

The program is aimed primarily at economically at-risk 2 to 4 year olds and their mothers. The program is designed to help the mother (or in some instances, father) guide her child to success in preschool or elementary school. In twice-weekly, half-hour home sessions, a "toy demonstrator" (home visitor) brings weekly gifts of books and toys and models for the parents a curriculum of verbal and other positive interaction with their children. The books and toys are permanently assigned to the family. Although the parents are given no direct teaching or set tasks, they do receive a "guide sheet" that contains a curriculum of core concepts (e.g., colors, numbers, reasoning) illustrated by the current book or toy. The parents are free to use the toy or book as they wish.

The Mother-Child Home Program continues for two years and over time, the parent gradually takes over the home sessions while the toy demonstrator fades into the background. If toy demonstrators become aware that a family is in need of additional resources/services, they will alert the program coordinator who then follows up with the family.

The Mother-Child Home Program is eligible in school systems for Title 1 (Chapter 1) Even Start, and other federal funding. The Mother-Child Home Program's yearly cost per family, including all staff and curriculum/play materials, ranges from $360 to $2,300, averaging about $1,500.

Local Implementation Site

Abbeville County School District

Contact: *Rebecca Rich, Coordinator*
500 Chestnut Street
Abbeville, SC 29620
(803) 459-5427

Abbeville, South Carolina, is a small community (population approximately 6000) located near the Georgia-South Carolina border. Many of the families in this area are poor and/or unemployed. In addition, many of the children are "at risk" for later school difficulties. Unfortunately, for a number of years, there were no services or programs available to help these children and their families. The Abbeville County School District recognized this problem and began efforts to address it. In 1993, the Abbeville County School District initiated the Mother-Child Home Program as part of an Even Start grant to address the areas of early child development and adult literacy. The Mother-Child Home Program was selected due, in part, to the intensity of the program (one-on-one attention/twice a week home visit) and the fact that the program did not have to be center-based. At that time, there were no available facilities to house an early childhood program.

Now in its second year, the Mother-Child Home Program is serving 28 families in Abbeville County. In an attempt to further meet the needs of the community, the program now offers a series of parent workshops (e.g., managing finances, parenting skills, wellness, computer classes). To further assist participants, transportation and child care also are provided.

Those involved in the Mother-Child Home Program have developed extensive contact with other agencies and servers within the community. Because this program originated with an Even Start grant, there is close collaboration with the adult education director. In addition, through regular staff meetings, organizers of the Mother-Child Home Program can coordinate their efforts with other local agencies, such as Head Start, the Department of Social Services, the local housing authority, and the Coalition for a Healthy Community.

Parents As Teachers (PAT)

Contact: Parents As Teachers National Center, Inc.
9374 Olive Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63132
(314) 432-4330

Research and follow-up studies have shown Parents As Teachers to be effective in advancing children's development in language, social development, problem solving, and other intellectual abilities

Parents As Teachers (PAT) is a home-school-community partnership that reaches families prior to the birth of their child, during the third trimester of pregnancy, through age three and beyond. The program is based on the philosophy that parents are a child's first and most influential teachers. Parents as Teachers strives to help parents give their children the necessary foundation for future success and to develop a closer working relationship between families and schools. Families are served regardless of socioeconomic status, educational background, or ethnicity.

Through this program, parents obtain skills to make the most of their child's crucial early-learning years. Trained parent educators deliver services to families using the Parents As Teachers curriculum, which includes information on child development and guidance in using activities with children meant to encourage development of language, intellectual growth, curiosity, and social skills. The Parents As Teachers support system consists of home visits by parent educators, parent group meetings, screenings to monitor the child's overall development, a parent resource center, and a referral network linking families with special services.

Research and follow-up studies have shown Parents As Teachers to be effective in advancing children's development in language, social development, problem solving, and other intellectual abilities. Children who have participated in Parents As Teachers were shown to score significantly higher on standardized measures of reading and writing in first grade. As a group, parents who participated in the program were found to initiate contact with teachers and take an active role in their child's education at a significantly higher rate than nonparticipants.

In 1991, Parents As Teachers was recognized by the National Diffusion Network, signifying that the program had provided evidence of its effectiveness. The program has adapted its model to fit the needs of families of varying kinds and circumstances. Programs have been initiated through Even Start and other Chapter 1 programs, as well as Head Start. Parents As Teachers has been initiated in child-care centers and has been shown to enhance the quality of child-care and parent/caregiver relationships. Parents As Teachers for Teen Parents offers instruction and guidance to aid in the difficult challenges faced by that

group. Corporations offer Parents As Teachers to employees as an investment to the community and the present and future workforce.

Parents As Teachers services are offered through, and supported by, local school districts for a minimum of eight months, preferably year round. Districts often contribute space, clerical assistance, and program administration. Start-up costs are estimated at $2725 for training and materials/supplies. Operating costs are estimated to be $560 per family (assuming a sixty-family load per full-time parent educator).

Local Implementation Site

Project Enlightenment

Contact: *Linda Carothers, Parent Educator*
501 South Boylan Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27603
(919) 834-7805

Project Enlightenment is a comprehensive early childhood program serving children from birth through the completion of kindergarten, their parents, teachers, and other caregivers. The Project is administered through the Wake County Public School System and affiliated with the total Area Mental Health Program of Wake County and The Child Psychiatry Training Program at Dorothea Dix Hospital. It includes a multidisciplinary staff of early childhood educators, parent education workers, and psychologists. Project Enlightenment's approach to mental health is based on principles of prevention and early intervention. Helping the caregivers of young children provide a healthy, nurturing climate at home and in school can promote conditions conducive to optimal growth and development. The primary services offered through Project Enlightenment include teacher/parent consultation, parent education, counseling and support, TALKline, teacher training, and technical assistance. The Project also houses a Parent/Teacher Resource Center and a Demonstration Preschool. Thousands of Wake County residents receive the Project's services each year.

For 26 years, parents and caregivers have been at the center of Project Enlightenment's approach. In 1988, realizing the importance of reaching families of infants, the Project expanded its services to include Parents as Teachers (PAT). Through the support of funding provided by a local educational foundation, Project Enlightenment has been able to provide the PAT program to 50 families. At the same time, Project Enlightenment is working with other community agencies to coordinate and develop similar services. For example, through a program entitled "Step-By-Step," Project Enlightenment is collaborating with the Wake County Health Department to provide a Parents As

Teachers program to mothers who tested positive prenatally for an illegal substance.

Project Enlightenment has received local, state, and national recognition for its innovative approaches to prevention and early intervention, its effective service delivery system, and its positive influence in the community. It has been recognized as a model program by the State of North Carolina, the Children's Defense Fund, and the National Association of Mental Health. Project Enlightenment is currently a national training site for Parents As Teachers, and assists communities across North Carolina in developing PAT programs.

P.I.A.G.E.T.

(Promoting Intellectual Adaptation Given Experiential Transforming)

Contact: Thomas D. Yawkey
P.I.A.G.E.T.
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education
Pennsylvania State University
Chambers Building
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 865-1807

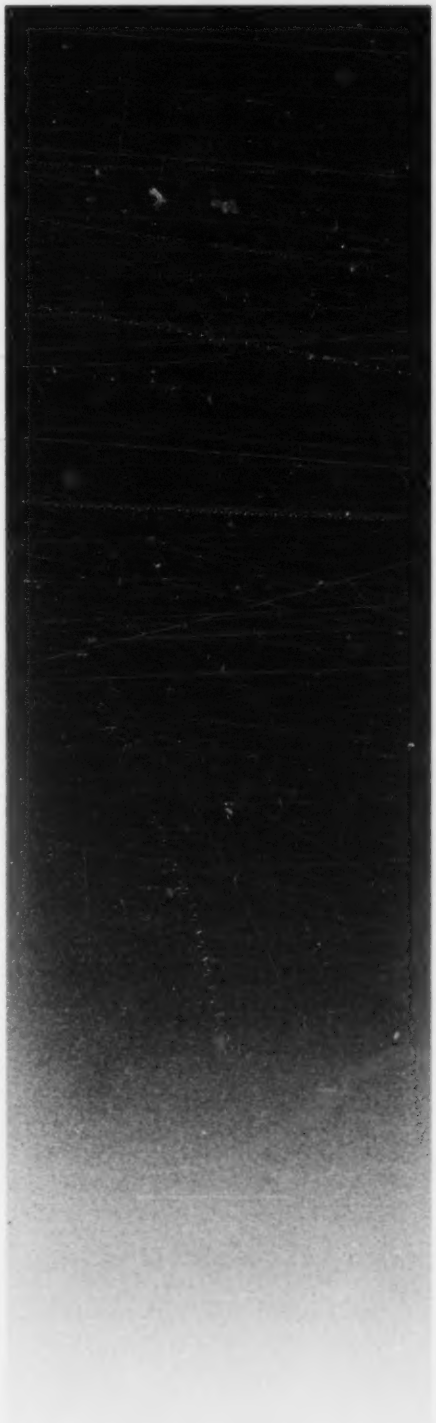
P.I.A.G.E.T. is a home/school-based program for young, limited English-proficient children and their parents. The program, first developed in 1987 and recognized by NDN in 1993, is based on the philosophies of Dr. Jean Piaget and focuses on increasing English language, communication, self-concept, and understanding of native cultures in limited English proficient children. P.I.A.G.E.T. currently serves a number of native language groups including: Spanish, Haitian-Creole, Polish, Russian, and Asian (Korean, Chinese, Cambodian, and Vietnamese).

The P.I.A.G.E.T. program has two major components. The classroom component has trained teachers/facilitators using Piaget-derived strategies for working with young bilingual children ages 1-8. The emphasis is on developing the child's English language as well as native language, helping the child develop thinking skills and cognitive decision-making skills, and developing a positive self-concept.

The second component of this program is family development. The goal of this segment is to help family members to become teachers of their young children in the home or other settings where learning naturally

occurs. Trained facilitators work with family members to learn how to use home activities with their children. Activities often build on classroom curriculum. These activities enable the parents to become teachers of their children and increase the interaction between adults and children. Key elements of the family component include: parent curricula, home mastery learning cycle, home visit reports, and monitoring.

The National Diffusion Network reports that costs include training ($300 for two days of training), materials ($800-$900), and travel costs ($400-$500 for the home component). The program has seen significant improvement in children's reading readiness and language proficiency. Families involved in the program have shown significantly higher scores on scales of positive attitudes toward school and their children.



Local Implementation Site

Bethune Education Center

Contact: *Dee Siemianowski, Family Literacy Instructor, or Patti LaCross, Migrant Even Start Instructor*
614 South 5th Street
Immokalee, FL 33934
(941) 657-2351

The Bethune Education Center is a community education facility serving the residents of Immokalee, Florida. Immokalee's full time population of 14,129 doubles during the planting and harvesting season of October through April. Sixty-six percent of area residents are Hispanic. The Migrant Even Start Program, implemented at the Bethune Education Center, is a collaborative effort of the Collier County Public Schools Adult and Community Education program and the Collier County Housing Authority. The program addresses the problem of illiteracy in the Immokalee community by enhancing the achievement gains of both parents and children of the migrant population. P.I.A.G.E.T. has become a major component of this overall effort to increase educational opportunities in the community.

The Immokalee P.I.A.G.E.T. project assists migrant farm-working families with children ages birth to 4, children ages 4-7 who are having difficulty in school, migrant families of limited English proficiency, undereducated parents of targeted children, and migrant families with histories of intergenerational illiteracy. All members of a family, responsible for the children's well being, are included in the P.I.A.G.E.T. experience. In its first year of operation (1994-1995), the Immokalee P.I.A.G.E.T. project was able to serve 39 families.

Other educational opportunities also available through Immokalee's Bethune Education Center include: general parenting training, adult literacy classes, English fluency programs, GED coursework, health and nutrition materials, family socials, teen parent activities, the "Bucket of Books" program, and a satellite library.

Success for All

Contact: Center for Research on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Students
The Johns Hopkins University
3505 North Charles Street.
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 516-0274

Success for All is a school-based achievement-oriented program for disadvantaged students pre-K through grade 5. The program is designed to prevent and/or intervene in the development of learning problems in the early years by organizing instructional and family support resources within the regular classroom. The goals of the program are to: ensure that every student in a targeted school will finish third grade with grade-level reading skills; reduce the number of students retained; increase attendance; and address family needs for food, housing, and medical care to enable families to support their children's education.

The program provides activities for preschool and kindergarten, a daily 90-minute reading period for kindergarten to grade 5, and one-to-one tutoring for students in grades 1-3. A family support team is available to work with families, to develop plans to meet needs of individual students, and to integrate community and school resources. A full-time facilitator works with teachers to help them implement the reading program. Teachers receive three days of inservice training and detailed manuals at the beginning of each school year as well as extensive classroom follow-up throughout the year. Students are evaluated every eight weeks to assess their reading progress. This information is used to assign tutors, suggest alternative teaching strategies, make changes in reading group placement, begin family support interventions, or devise other strategies.

Research indicates that participants in the Success for All program experience significant improvement in test scores, especially students in the lowest quarter of their grade. The number of students retained and referred for special education placement also has significantly declined.

Success for All services are offered through the local school. Fully funded services are estimated to be $800 per student. While some schools do offer scaled-back Success for All programs, they tend to reach only those most in need, rather than all students.

Local Implementation Site

Harrison Elementary School
Contact: *Teresa Miskell*
164 East South Boulevard
Montgomery, AL 36105
(334) 284-8001

Harrison Elementary School is located in inner-city Montgomery, Alabama and has approximately 475 students. Ninety-nine percent of the students are minority, 92 percent qualify for Title 1 (Chapter 1) reading and free- or reduced-price meal services. Harrison Elementary initiated the basic principles of the Success for All program in 1990 for grades K-6. The school has seen an increase in the reading scores of the students in the lower quartile, increased attendance, and a reduction in special education placements. In addition, program facilitators and administrators report an increase in parental involvement in Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) activities, a decrease in student out-of-school suspensions, and an increase in responses to parent surveys when distributed. The school has responded to the desires of the families by sponsoring numerous programs designed to increase family involvement. For example, school functions include a meal and some type of performance by the children, health fairs, home visits, and a well-baby clinic.

Harrison Elementary has initiated extensive contact with the community. Neighborhood watch groups have been formed to deter the distribution of drugs near the school and have been extremely successful in this effort. The school has enlisted the support of local businesses by developing partnerships. These businesses have provided technological equipment, furniture and materials, food, and human resources. In addition, the school has enlisted the help of the National Guard to spend two weeks each year, at the school, to conduct the kindergarten screening program.

Grassroots Success

Many of the best family participation efforts are those that have "bubbled up" out of the community.

A primary purpose of this Sharing Success publication is to inform educators about effective and innovative practices throughout the region and encourage their adoption or adaptation. The search for successful programs began with many of the well-known, "commercial" family participation programs; however, it is often difficult for one program to meet all of a community's needs. Communities, like families, are unique. They are composed of diverse populations living in a variety of settings. In order to reach out to the entire community, family participation programs must be flexible, adaptable, and customized to the families within the community.

Many of the best family participation efforts are those that have "bubbled up" out of the community—programs such as the Family Learning Team in Greenville, South Carolina where the primary focus is on engaging families early in the literacy process. Staff there are working with both parents and children to strengthen the entire family learning system.

In Dothan, Alabama, community leaders found that there was a tremendous need for an interagency family services center. As a result, a center has been created which localizes services (e.g., health and dental care, job training, financial assistance) for families and prevents fragmentation and duplication of services.

Troup County, Georgia found that through the use of family service coordinators they were better able to reach families within the community. It is the job of the family service coordinator to visit each home monthly, taking materials and educational ideas, and providing family assistance.

In Tupelo, Mississippi, there was a strong demand from the community for child development and parenting information. This resulted in a lending library where families can go to check out books, videotapes, and pamphlets.

In 1994, Orange County, Florida launched an innovative program that turned inner city schools into "learning and leadership" centers which served as pilot sites for a new approach to delivering educational, social, recreational, and other human services. As a result of this effort, 16 more Family Resource Centers have evolved in schools.

Although each of these programs has a slightly different approach, the family is at the center of the process. All recognize that the family has a profound impact on the level at which a child succeeds. When families take an active role in children's learning, children are far more likely to do well in school and in life.

Another lesson that these communities have learned is that in order to address the complex problems families face, people within the public and

private sector must work together. If communities are to improve services to children and families, various agencies and organizations must learn to integrate systems and form collaboratives. By pooling financial and human resources, organizations can more effectively serve the community.

As you read this section, think about your own community. Think about the approaches that would best fit your families. Be willing to collaborate with local agencies and programs in order to provide the best care and services to those children and families within your area.

Family Learning Team

Greenville, South Carolina

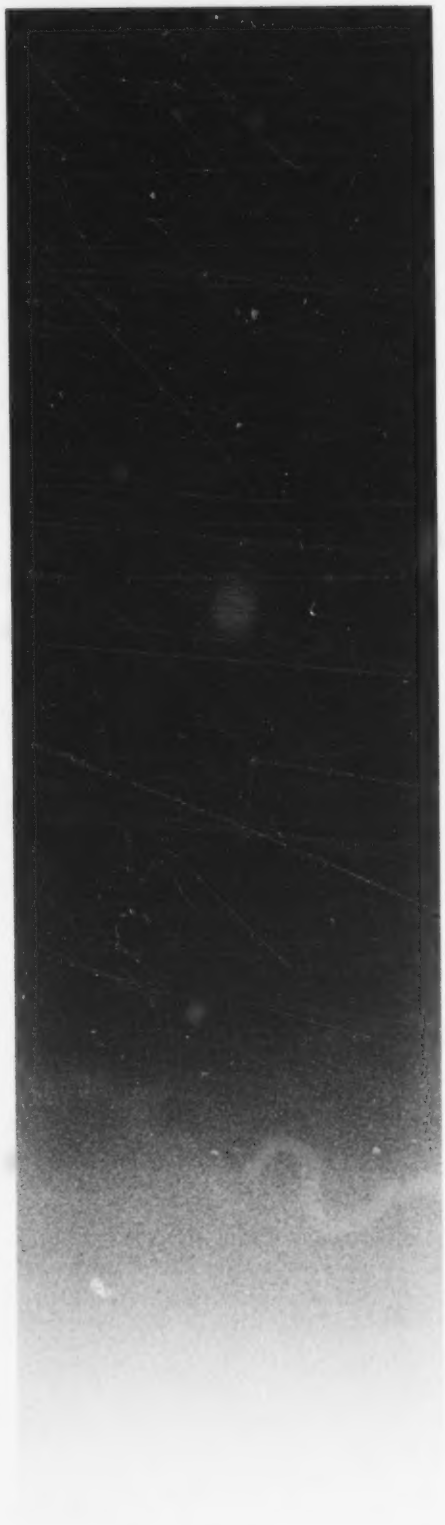
Contact: Alana Maitland or Sara Mansbach
Sullivan Center
206 Wilkins Street
Greenville, SC 29605
(803) 241-3508 or 241-3563

The School District of Greenville County established the Family Learning Team in an effort to address the needs of young children and prevent school failure by providing support and assistance to the entire family. While the program does work with the entire family, it is especially concerned with intervening in the cycle of intergenerational family illiteracy. The word "team" in the program's title emphasizes the need for strong partnerships in order to support young children's readiness and school success. The letters T.E.A.M. stand for "Together Everyone Achieves More." One of the basic philosophies of the program is that parents, teachers, community representatives, administrators, school board members, and children all are important in ensuring young children's success.

The Family Learning Team evolved from the Training Opportunities for Parent Success (TOPS) Program, which was established under a Target 2000 grant in 1990. Originally, five elementary schools were used as sites for the pilot project. With a staff of three, TOPS developed a program of home visits, parent group meetings, and a monthly newsletter for parents of preschoolers. In 1993, the district was awarded an Even Start grant and the TOPS program and other district parenting efforts were woven into the Family Learning Team.

There are four basic components of the program: family literacy programs, parent meetings, home visits, and a program newsletter.

The family literacy program includes services for parents and children that are designed to strengthen the entire family learning system. In this program, parents are able to work on their GED, and preschoolers



are able to develop readiness skills. In addition to parent-child activities, there also is time for parents to interact with one another.

Parent meetings are offered for all parents in the School District of Greenville County. Meetings occur monthly, and in some cases twice a month, in each school served by the Family Learning Team. Sample parent meeting topics include: family stress management, child and family safety, positive discipline, and family learning activities.

Home visits also are part of the program. These visits are available to parents of newborns through 4 year olds, and visits are scheduled at the parents' request. Each visit includes discussion time with both the parent and child, introduction of an activity, and modeling of the process by the home visitor. Books and other learning materials often are left with the families to encourage learning interactions between parent and child. These visits usually last about one hour, and the content often is interrelated with the material covered in group meetings.

The program newsletter, Family Learning Times, is the major news and information piece for the Family Learning Team program. The newsletter is filled with parenting tips, event announcements, games, songs, simple recipes, and activities for preschoolers.

In addition to the four program components, the Family Learning Team collaborates with a number of community agencies and organizations for referral, planning, and training. For example, the Family Learning Team collaborates with the local Housing Authority, the Urban League, and the Greenville Hospital system. It also provides materials and speakers for additional parenting programs such as Shepherd's Gate (homeless families), A Child's Haven (abused preschoolers), and the Friendly Connection (teenage mothers).

At this time, 23 sites within the School District of Greenville County provide some form of parent and family education/support services during the preschool years. Nine of these sites provide comprehensive parent education, family literacy, and family support services. Results from a recent study (Swick, 1995) indicate that the program is having an impact on families. For example, almost 91 percent of the parents surveyed in this study believed that they had developed a better relationship with their children's school as a result of the program. In addition, 95 percent of the parents surveyed reported that they had learned new activities to use at home with their children.

Although it is still early in this program's development, there is increasing evidence of its effectiveness. This program is an example of the importance of engaging families early in the literacy process and providing them with the support and encouragement they need to become successful learners.

Family Resource Centers

Orange County Public Schools
Orlando, Florida

Contact: Sarah Sprinkel, Program Specialist
Early Childhood Education
Orange County Public Schools
445 West Amelia Street
Orlando, FL 32801
(407) 849-3200 or (407) 849-3330

In the 1994-95 school year, Orange County launched an innovative program that turned two inner-city elementary schools into first-of-their-kind learning and leadership centers.

Orange County Public Schools is the 16th largest district in the nation, and provides educational services to a diverse population of children and families. Because of that, the school district encourages each school community to design services in a way that best meets the unique needs of that community. The district takes pride in the fact that one model does not fit all and works to foster that concept.

In the 1994-95 school year, Orange County launched an innovative program that turned two inner-city elementary schools into first-of-their-kind learning and leadership centers. These two schools served as pilot sites for the development of a new approach to delivering educational, social, recreational, and human services. Since that time, 16 Family Service Centers have opened at school sites with each one designing the model that fits their community's needs.

Through co-funding by Even Start, First Start, Head Start, Title One Migrant, United Way, private donations, and other funding, and through co-locating and sharing resources, these centers are able to offer a broad menu of services to meet the needs of children from birth through age eight and their families.

The mission of the centers is to strengthen and empower families, enhance the capabilities of parents, and foster the optimal development of children. To accomplish this, the centers offer resources, education, and support programs throughout the community, from neighborhoods and schools to local corporations. Services that are offered by these centers include playshops, parent and child preschool coop programs for children ages 2-5 years, immunizations provided free by the Health Department, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), parent education and support groups, support to homeless shelters, Women, Infant and Children (WIC) services, General Equivalency Diploma (GED) classes, home visits, teen parenting groups, lending libraries, computer classes, hearing and vision screenings, literacy training, and referral services.

By working with United Way and the Success by Six program, businesses, government agencies, human service providers and educators

work together to see that every child has the opportunity to be born healthy, grow up healthy, be nurtured by informed parents and caregivers, and have access to quality preschool programs.

Plans are still evolving and will continue to change as the needs of families change. Some things that will not change are the efforts of Orange County to continue hiring quality people, providing ongoing professional development, sharing resources, and involving communities. The county feels these elements are the keys to their success.

The Family Resource Center

Tupelo, Mississippi

Contact: Cathy Grace or Anelese Franklin
Family Resource Center
425 Magnolia Street
Tupelo, MS 38801
(601) 844-0560

The Family Resource Center of Tupelo, Mississippi opened its doors in May 1994 through the efforts of Lee County Schools, Lift Head Start, the CREATE Foundation (private community foundation), and Tupelo Public Schools. The stated mission of the Family Resource Center is to serve as a presence within the community, to promote the flow of resources, and support families in ways that strengthen the functioning and enhance the growth and development of the individual members and family unit.

Although this is the first year that the Family Resource Center has been in operation, the staff have been very busy developing new programs, establishing networks within the service community, and building partnerships in order to broaden the base of services offered. Since opening its doors, the Family Resource Center has served more than 200 families. The number of children served exceeds 325.

Prior to opening its doors, a community needs assessment was conducted in Tupelo to determine the needs of parents and their children birth through age 8. At that time, parents indicated that the services most needed in the community were classes on stress management, learning activities, effective discipline, and improving communication. In addition, parents requested that resources and materials related to child development topics be made available. As a result of this needs assessment, the following services have been offered through the Family Resource Center: a lending library containing books, videotapes, and other resource materials; weekly parenting classes addressing such topics as stress management, parent/child communication, nutrition, and discipline strategies; and employee workshops and seminars designed to help employees learn to balance work and home responsibilities more effectively.

Volunteers are a vital resource at the Family Resource Center. They provide child care during parenting classes and frequently assist in instructing those classes. Volunteers also have been helpful in providing materials and equipment that makes it possible for the center to continue to operate.

The effectiveness of the programs has been assessed through classroom attendance, use of the lending library, participation in workplace seminars, and self-reports from child care providers. Additional evaluation is planned.

Family Services Center

Dothan, Alabama

Contact: Linda O'Connell
Family Services Center
301 West Lafayette Street
Dothan, AL 36301
(334) 712-1542

In an effort to further improve education in the city of Dothan and the state of Alabama, the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, the City of Dothan, and the Dothan City Schools joined to form a task force to address Goal 1 of America's Education Goals 2000. Goal 1 states, "All children will start school ready to learn." In order to address this goal, the task force recommended that the city establish an interagency family services center. According to the task force, the service delivery system was insufficient to meet the needs of the community. The task force recommended that the center be a community-based program which focuses on family concerns, priorities, and builds on the families' strengths. Moreover, the task force recommended that multidisciplinary interagency collaboration be emphasized in order to avoid fragmentation and duplication of services.

As a result of these efforts, in November 1994, the Family Services Center of Dothan, Alabama, opened its doors. One of the first programs of its kind in the state, the Family Services Center offers "one-stop shopping" to those most needing help in the Dothan area. The goal of the center is to support families, improve the quality of their lives, and help them become self-sufficient. Since its opening, the center has provided services to more than 400 families, either on site or through referrals made to other agencies.

When a family first enters the center, a needs assessment is conducted to determine what services are most needed. The most requested areas of assistance are education, job training, financial assistance, shelter, and dental service. On site is the Career Center, where adults attend GED

classes and learn job readiness skills. While parents are in the Career Center, their children are being cared for in the child care center. In addition to these services, there is a child health and dental clinic which provides screenings, immunizations, and dental services.

Parents Are Teachers, Too

Troup County, Georgia

Contact: Dr. Patricia B. Barton, Curriculum Director, PreK-5, or
Natalie Huberdeau, Lead Family Services Coordinator
Troup County School System
Instructional Support Services
3157 Roanoke Road
LaGrange, GA 30240
(706) 812-7920

The Troup County School System Parents Are Teachers, Too (PATT) prekindergarten program serves four-year-old children and their families. The program is based on the belief that parents are children's first and most important teachers. The Parents Are Teachers, Too philosophy reflects that parents truly are concerned about and want to play an important role in their child's development.

PATT has four major overall goals: (1) to empower parents and families to meet their own needs, (2) to assist parents in preparing for and acquiring employment, (3) to help assure that students are ready for school, and (4) to form partnerships with parents to help assure school success for students.

The Parents Are Teachers, Too program is being implemented in eight schools and fifteen classrooms throughout Troup County. There are approximately 20 students in each classroom with one certified teacher and one teaching assistant. The classroom component uses the High/Scope curriculum, which is based on the belief that children learn best when actively engaged in learning. A family services facilitator, trained in the national Parents As Teachers curriculum, is assigned to each classroom. The role of the family service coordinator is to conduct monthly home visits and to assist in empowering families by providing them with support in seeking continuing education, employment, and referral to community agencies as needed.

Parents Are Teachers, Too emphasizes empowering the families of the children it serves. The families, the family services facilitator, and the teachers work together as a team to establish a positive relationship with the school and ensure a successful educational experience for all.

Conclusion

As this review of research and successful programs has demonstrated, schools can and do play a key role in strengthening the connections between home and school; however, for these efforts to be truly successful, the leadership within the school must share these core beliefs (Alving, 1993):

- All families have worth and any missed family is a missed opportunity.
- The school alone cannot undertake the raising of children; it requires the home, community, and school all working together.
- Support and cooperation from the family has the greatest influence on a child's achievement in school.
- Teachers have an enormous influence on whether or not a family feels welcome in the school. A teacher's personal invitation to visit the school can dramatically increase the likelihood that a family will come to school.
- No single effort will change student achievement; however, a omprehensive effort over time will improve those attitudes and support from home that are necessary for a child to succeed in school.
- Cooperation from the home determines the extent of support for district proposals for school reform.

While these changes cannot occur over night, with time, a plan, and solid support, a schoolwide family participation program will bring great rewards.

PARENTS

Section IV

Resources

The previous sections of this document have reviewed the changing needs of children and their families, strategies educators could use in developing family participation activities, and descriptions of successful programs and practices.

This section is designed to help educators and other school personnel build relationships with families and gather information for helping families. Knowing the needs of families and students, the value schools and teachers place on family involvement, and what families think about the school—its education and opportunities for family involvement, and the extent of current family participation efforts—are important first steps in designing a program to enhance family participation in the school.

Several tools are provided to assist educators who want to analyze their needs with respect to family participation, both in the classroom and schoolwide, and for soliciting information from families about their needs. The section also provides ideas about funding sources, ways to identify resource opportunities, and ideas for concept papers or proposals to potential funders.

Sample Letter to Families

This letter could be sent to each family either prior to the school year or during the first few weeks of school. It can be personalized to fit your particular situation.

Dear parent(s) name:

I am writing to introduce myself and to welcome (child's name) into my classroom. I strongly believe that parents are their children's first and most important teachers and I want to work with you throughout the year to make sure that (child's name) gets the best education possible.

I invite you to play an active role in the education of your child. Please feel free to visit the school and my classroom at any time. Do not hesitate to talk with me about your child's progress and any concerns you may have. I also want you to keep me informed about (child's name) reactions to school and the experiences (he/she) has here.

In turn, I promise to keep you informed as to how (child's name) is doing. I'll provide written reports, opportunities for parent/teacher conferences, meetings, or whatever is necessary to make sure you are aware of how your child is doing in school and that we are working together to provide positive learning experiences for (child's name).

(Include a short personal paragraph about yourself and your interests. Things such as how long you have taught, what skills you emphasize in your classroom, etc.)

I would like to meet with you to discuss (child's name) education—(his/her) strengths, needs, and anything that I might do to help make sure this year is the best ever for (child's name). Please call me at your convenience if you would like to set up a time to talk.

Your comments are always welcome. I value your opinion and believe that by working together we can make this a successful year for (child's name). Again, don't hesitate to call me if you have additional questions, ideas, or feedback. I can be reached at (phone number) between the hours of ____ and ____.
Thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

(teacher's name)

Sample Parent Checklist

This may be given to parents to help them determine and/or clarify their needs and concerns. It also represents one way of learning more about what families think about the school and their level of possible involvement. Teachers can use this checklist in an initial parent/teacher conference, or they can send it along with the preceding letter at the beginning of the school year.

Sample Parent Checklist

Parents, please check (✔) those statements that reflect your thoughts and feelings about the opportunities you have to become involved in your children's education. Your feedback will be used to improve our school and make it more accessible to parents.

- ❑ I know that my involvement in my child's education is important.
- ❑ I have limited time to devote to my child's education at home.
- ❑ My work hours limit the time I can spend with my child.
- ❑ School meetings and parent/teacher conferences take place at a time when I can attend.
- ❑ I believe my child's teacher gives me enough information about how my child is doing in school.
- ❑ I believe my child's teacher respects my rights as a parent.
- ❑ The information I receive from the school is easy to understand.
- ❑ My family and child speak a different language at home than the one used in the school.
- ❑ I feel comfortable talking with my child's teacher.
- ❑ I regularly visit the school—to volunteer, observe in the classroom, visit teachers, and attend PTA and other meetings.
- ❑ I am able to help my child with learning activities or homework at home.
- ❑ I ask my child's teacher for ways I can help with learning activities at home.
- ❑ My family would like to know more about parenting skills.
- ❑ I know where I can go for help with basic needs such as child care, housing, transportation.
- ❑ I feel like I am an equal partner with my child's teacher with regard to education issues.
- ❑ I feel that my opinions, ideas, and advice are respected by my child's teacher.

Parents, after checking these statements, please answer the following questions:

What are the three most important things I need to know more about my parenting skills?

What are the three most important things I need more information about regarding my child's education program?

What are some ways I can involve my child in learning activities at home?

What special skills, interests, and knowledge do I have that my child's school needs? How can I help?

Parents, please check (✔) what areas you would like to know more about.

I would like to know more about:

- ❑ how to help with learning activities at home
- ❑ how to volunteer at the school
- ❑ when I can visit the school or my child's classroom
- ❑ learning how to read to my child
- ❑ health needs of my child
- ❑ where to find after-school child care
- ❑ learning activities during vacation and holidays
- ❑ what games help my child learn
- ❑ how to talk to teachers about concerns I have about my child
- ❑ finding other parents who share some of my concerns
- ❑ other_____

When sending a survey home to parents, make sure it is accompanied by a brief cover letter describing the purpose of the survey and how the results will be used. Also be sure to provide parents with directions about when, where, and how surveys should be returned. If parents are to mail the survey back to the school, provide them with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Questions for All School Staff to Consider When Developing a Schoolwide Plan for Family Involvement

When considering adding or changing family participation programs, educators and others who work with children and families should consider the overall climate of family involvement in the school. The following questions will address some of the issues school staff should consider when developing a schoolwide family involvement plan. You can use these questions as prompts to guide your discussions.

Sample Questions

- What are the needs (academic, health, social) of the children in our school?
- What are the key needs of the families of these children?
- Are there special characteristics of the families and children we need to address (such as language, working parents, cultural minorities, health, etc.)?
- Does the school have formal goals and evaluation measures of various family participation projects?
- Do the programs reflect the changing needs of children and families?
- Do school personnel and families often agree (or disagree) about parent involvement?
- What percentage of families currently are involved with the school and in what ways?
- Do family members regularly visit the school or classrooms?
- How do families shape family involvement in the school?
- Do families have a voice in helping plan their children's educational program?
- Is there a schoolwide definition or plan of family involvement?
- Do all school personnel feel comfortable working with parents of students? If not, why not?
- Does the day-to-day school environment support a strong family involvement component by encouraging time to work with parents, and sharing resources and information about individual student and family needs?
- Does the school have a formal and well-organized parent involvement plan? Is there a central person who provides guidance, information, or resources for the staff?
- Are families involved in decisions regarding school policy?

Information about what families want for their children's education and how they want to be involved must guide the development of family involvement programs and improve education experiences for children.

- Are families represented on policy-making committees such as school advisory or governance councils? If not, why not?
- Do teachers in the school have adequate training for parent involvement activities?
- Do families feel they are part of the school community?
- Is the school viewed positively by the community?

After answering these questions, ask yourselves:

1. Where are the major gaps in our school's approach to family participation?

2. Based on the population we serve, where should we place more emphasis?

3. Do staff members (teachers, principal, and others) agree on the importance of family participation in our school?

4. Do staff members agree upon the different levels of involvement (i.e., PTA attendance versus classroom participation versus policy decisions)?

Now look back at the Family Involvement Model in Section II and provide recommendations to your school leadership.

Four Strategies for Soliciting Input from Families

One of the most neglected aspects when designing family participation programs in many schools is the failure to obtain meaningful and ongoing input from families about their priorities, needs, and expectations for their children. Information about what families want for their children's education and how they want to be involved must guide the development of family involvement programs and improve education experiences for children. One-shot parent/teacher conferences or occasional meetings are not as effective as concentrated

efforts to involve families in purposeful, working partnerships with educators.

Four strategies are offered as tools for conducting a comprehensive needs assessment. They are:

- surveys
- one-on-one interviews
- focus groups
- town meetings

Each could be used to elicit information from families (and other community members) about their role in their children's education, their role at school, and their role in helping design education programs.

A. Family Survey

This survey could be used by school personnel to elicit comments from families on how responsive they feel the school and educators are to their needs. Information from this survey would be useful in planning a schoolwide family involvement initiative.

Sample Survey

Using the following scale, circle the response that best fits your opinion.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	My child's school has a well-defined and well-planned family involvement plan.	SD	D	A	SA
2.	My child and I are regularly invited to participate in conferences, meetings, and other activities.	SD	D	A	SA
3.	My role and opinions as a parent are valued by the school.	SD	D	A	SA
4.	I feel welcome at school at all times.	SD	D	A	SA
5.	I feel that the school is responsive to my needs as a parent.	SD	D	A	SA
6.	My child's teacher is frequently available to talk with me about my child's education progress.	SD	D	A	SA
7.	I regularly receive information from the school.	SD	D	A	SA
8.	I regularly send information to the school or to my child's teacher.	SD	D	A	SA
9.	I participate in training opportunities that help me learn how to be a better parent for my child.	SD	D	A	SA
10.	I provide a quiet space at home for my child to work on learning activities.	SD	D	A	SA
11.	I support my child's learning with positive comments about the importance of education.	SD	D	A	SA
12.	The school provides ongoing opportunities for me to participate in decisions made about its education programs.	SD	D	A	SA
13.	The school provides ongoing opportunities for me to serve on policy-making committees.	SD	D	A	SA

Please provide short answers.

Things I would like the school to do more of (regarding parent involvement) are:

Things I would like the school to discontinue or do less of (regarding parent involvement) are:

The most important thing my child's school can do to encourage me to become more involved in my child's education is:

I would like to know more about:

Former parents, non-parents, or parents-to-be also may have an interest in the school's family involvement programs and can contribute their ideas about planning for current and future parent participation strategies.

B. One-on-One Interviews

Open-ended interviews conducted in families' homes or at the school provide another way to learn more about families' needs and their expectations for their children's education. Interviews can be designed to draw out responses to the same questions as in the suggested survey, yet give a more personal touch.

Interviewers should have some training in basic interviewing techniques and skills. Consider using parents or community members to conduct the interviews.

Remember, the main purposes of the interviews are to:

- Find out how families would like to be involved in their children's education at home and at the school
- Learn more about what the school can do to increase family participation
- Use family input to help design effective programs

C. Focus Groups

Focus groups are a good way to bring small groups of parents and family members together to discuss their concerns about their children's educational experiences in the school, to identify ways the school is or is not responding to their needs, and to solicit information parents and educators can use to make the school more "family friendly." Focus groups also give families a chance to meet each other and share ideas.

Again, some of the same survey items can be used; however, it is best to limit discussions to just one or two issues. Remember, you can hold focus groups throughout the year to address particular issues.

- Put together a joint parent/educator planning committee to develop the questions each focus group will address.
- Limit discussion to one or two issues.
- Limit the focus group to 4–12 people, with a skilled facilitator. The facilitator can be a parent or other person who has basic skills and knowledge about how to conduct and facilitate this type of discussion.
- Select participants because they have common characteristics or concerns that relate to the focus group topic.
- Participants do not vote, plan, or reach consensus.
- Conduct these sessions in a variety of settings in the neighborhoods and at various times to ensure that all families have a chance to participate.
- Provide thank you letters and feedback to focus group participants.

D. Town Meetings

Town meetings are another way to access families and other interested community members. Inviting families and community members to come together to discuss the importance of family participation widens the scope of potential participation in the school. Former parents, non-parents, or parents-to-be also may have an interest in the school's family involvement programs and can contribute their ideas about planning for current and future parent participation strategies.

Town meetings can be held in various sites across neighborhoods—churches, schools, recreational buildings, libraries—places that are easily accessible.

- Develop, jointly with parent representatives, an agenda for the meeting.
- Ask local newspapers, radio, and TV stations to publicize the event and report on the meeting afterward. Consider having a call-in time when families that cannot attend can ask questions.
- Send a newsletter to all families letting them know what issues were discussed at the meeting and what solutions were offered.

Tips for Families

Teachers can provide a list of tips to families to help them provide a home environment conducive to learning. The following are some sample tips you may want to give to parents of young children.

Portions of this list were adapted from several publications: Helping Your Child Succeed in School, Association of American Publishers School Division, 1989; Strategies for Involving Parents in Their Children's Education, Jones, 1991; A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement, Henderson & Berla, 1994; Moving America to the Head of the Class, Education Excellence Partnership, n.d. Please see the bibliography section.

Sample Tips

- Expect everyone to read. Read to preschool children for at least 20 minutes every day. Have school-age children read to you.
- Talk to your child about what you or they have read. It helps them learn to express themselves.
- Be a role model. Make sure your child sees you read every day.
- Tell your children real-life stories—about their grandparents, your work, what it was like for you when you were their age, what happened to you during the day.
- Encourage all family members—siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives—to talk to your children about their lives,

their schoolwork, etc. Ask all family members to read to your children.

- Listen to your child. Every day, ask your child to tell you about the day, whether he or she is in preschool or elementary school.
- Spend as much time in conversations with your child as possible. Ask open-ended questions to help your child develop complete ideas, rather than giving just a yes or no answer.
- Encourage your child's learning. Make sure he or she understands that learning isn't always easy. Asking for help is OK. Make a constant effort each day to give your child praise — point out when he or she is doing something right. Give positive feedback.
- Limit your child's television viewing. With your child, develop a weekly schedule of the programs he or she can watch. Talk about the programs. Ask your child to tell you what he or she learned.
- Don't let the television be the only learning tool children have outside the school. Provide educational games and toys, puzzles, books, computer programs, art supplies, or music that encourage your child to be creative.
- Rent videos or watch television specials related to a variety of topics—about animals, oceans and rivers, space travel, other countries, nature shows. Talk with your child about what he or she learned. Be aware of what topics your child was interested in and provide more information about the topic by buying books and other materials.
- Encourage your child's creativity—let him or her write a story, sing songs, draw pictures, act out a part.
- Give your child reasons and details for family decisions or other events. It helps develop his or her thinking and reasoning skills.
- Ask your child's teacher about what skills he or she is expected to know and learn—in preschool and at each grade level.
- Show teachers that you are interested in your child's education and the school by going to PTA and other school meetings, volunteering at the school, and asking questions about the school's education program.
- Volunteer to work in the school as a tutor or mentor.
- Volunteer at home—help prepare learning materials, make books, etc.
- Attend local school board meetings to learn about the issues being discussed and how they will affect your child. Ask questions.
- Find out about summer learning activities, after-school programs, and other activities that support learning outside the normal school operating hours.
- Talk with your employer about finding ways that will let you attend important school activities during working hours.
- Take your child to work with you. Let him or her see what you do at work and talk about the responsibilities of your job.
- Take your child with you on short trips such as trips to the local grocery store. Make a game of identifying items and learning how to

spell them (e.g., vegetables or favorite snacks). Point out new words on each trip.

- Talk to other parents. Find out what you have in common, how you feel about the school your children attend, what your children's needs are, and whether or not the school is responsive to your concerns.
- Have fun with your child. Laugh and tell silly stories, go to museums, parks, athletic events, family reunions, the zoo. Share favorite activities.

Funding Resources

Many local and regional businesses, private and public corporations, and state and federal governments offer resources (grants, in-kind support, materials, etc.) to help individual teachers, schools, and school districts improve their education programs. They can either be offered through start-up funds for new endeavors or additional support for ongoing activities.

Resources are available through state and federal funding in the areas of early childhood education and social service programs benefiting students. A review of state appropriation bills, the Federal Register, and national and social service journals provide summaries of funding opportunities.

In the area of family involvement, private funding through state and national corporations, private foundations, and business partnerships promote cooperative relationships between communities and schools. Funding in the area of youth services provides many opportunities to develop unique and innovative programs to enhance student readiness and parental involvement in the school and community.

Private corporations also provide funding in the areas of early childhood education, child development, elementary and secondary teacher education training, minority education programs, and community/school partnerships.

In order to identify potential resource opportunities, one of the first steps is to conduct an information search. There are many research tools available to collect information for needed resources and to get information on exemplary national and international programs. These include automated database reviews through Educational Research Information Clearinghouse (ERIC), Illinois Research Information System (IRIS), etc. These searches may be conducted through your local libraries, local school systems, community colleges, universities, and through the Internet system. The information search will provide you with a variety of human and fiscal resources available to meet your

needs. It is important to identify key words specific to your funding needs when conducting the search, e.g., parent involvement, early childhood, primary education.

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Communicating With Potential Funders

When you are requesting funds to support your project, there are generally three forms of solicitation: inquiry, concept paper, or proposal. Inquiry is commonly used as a first step in assessing the potential funder's interest in your project and possible requirements for submission. Once initial contact has been made, funders then will ask you to submit a more developed presentation of your idea and objectives. This may take the form of either a concept paper or formal proposal, and in some cases, both. A concept paper is typically a brief (2–5 pages) description and overview of the project. In contrast, an application or proposal is more detailed and may include a statement of need and project description, a budget, plan for evaluation, future funding requirements, and any other specific information required by that funding source. Concept papers or proposals should be accompanied by a cover letter requesting funding. This letter introduces the project and summarizes your needs. Guidelines for the development of these tools are provided in this section.

Inquiry

Prior to preparing a concept paper or proposal for funding, it is important that you inquire as to the organization's requirements and guidelines regarding funding. Inquiry may be in the form of a letter, via e-mail, or telephone. Regardless of the method of inquiry, there is essential information you should request, such as: deadlines for application, limits on funding requests (i.e., location, target population, etc.), and the process for application.

Concept Paper

The purpose of a concept paper is to determine the potential funder's interest in the project before presenting a fully-developed proposal. A concept paper is a two-to five-page development of the main idea of the project. It contains a brief review of the project need, a statement of the idea and its potential impact, and the assurance that staff have the qualifications and means (other than money) necessary to pursue the idea in a specific and needed way.

The concept paper may include:

1. A brief statement of the problem or issue you wish to address
2. The amount of money, materials, or resources you are asking for

3. Background evidence that the problem exists (give data, statistics)
4. Information about how you intend to address the problem/issue, strategies you will try, how you will develop partnerships with others such as parents, community groups, etc.
5. A description of project goals and objectives for a new project; if an enhancement to an ongoing effort, describe how new effort will support ongoing activities
6. A description of target population
7. Information about how the potential funders' resources will be used
8. A list of current support for the project (other resources, grants, supplemental funds, etc.)
9. Information about how students will benefit from this project
10. An evaluation plan–methods for evaluating program and results
11. Timelines for the project

Proposal

A proposal is an expansion of the concept paper, covering all of the above elements, but elaborating on each. It should be no more than five to ten pages. Along with the elements covered in a concept paper, additional components of a proposal should include:

1. Abstract—a one-page summary of the project
2. Plan of operation—descriptions of activities, timetable, management, and organizational structure
3. Key personnel—responsibilities and qualifications of those who will carry out the project
4. Resources and facilities—location, equipment and services necessary to carry out the project
5. Plans for funding the project after the grant expires
6. Detailed budget—itemized expenses, salaries, and materials anticipated for the project

Some funders may have their own application forms, in which case you should follow the guidelines that they provide.

When submitting either a concept paper or proposal, it is customary to include a brief cover letter (one to two pages) describing the need, proposed project, services to be provided, organization(s) providing services, methods of evaluation, and a statement of funds being requested.

A letter of request for funding is concise and should include:

1. A summary of your classroom/school/district goals and objectives
2. A brief description of project or activity you wish to undertake
3. A statement of the problem you plan to address
4. A list of proposed project activities and timelines for accomplishment
5. A statement of intended benefits or outcomes of the project

6. An estimated full cost of the project and the amount you are requesting
7. A description of the evaluation measures you intend to use

Within two weeks of sending the concept paper or proposal, you should call the prospective funder to confirm that the information was received and determine the status of the request.

The following page provides a sample cover letter requesting funding that you may adapt to fit your needs.

Sample Cover Letter

Dear:

Our school is considering ways to further promote family participation in order to enhance student learning. This letter is written to request (business/organization name) support for our efforts.

Our school district is composed of (provide demographics).

The **purpose** of our family participation program, (title), is to provide expanded activities and strategies to increase the interaction between teachers and families in our school.

We have identified several **needs** in our community that we would like to address. (List those pertinent to your program such as language literacy, special needs students, family work schedules, etc.)

Our school has established a family participation leadership team made up of (reflect team composition). The team is examining best practices, alternative approaches, and other strategies that will increase family participation. Based on those ideas, we would like to institute a program based on the following **goals**: (list goals)

Specific **activities** we will be undertaking are: (list activities)

Focusing on the above needs and the goals, it is our expectation that our students will receive the following **benefits**: (list benefits—but don't over promise)

As a means of **assessing** the results of our project, we will gather information through: (**method**–e.g., test scores, attendance to parent/teacher conferences, volunteer hours) and report (**data**–e.g., videotapes, graphs, charts, anecdotal notes, portfolios).

In order to meet these goals, we are requesting (indicate amount of money requested).

The school district's **support** for this program includes (administrative support, other outside funding, matching grants, etc.)

We look forward to hearing from you. If you need further information or have additional questions, please contact (name/phone).

Yours Truly,
(name, title)

List of Educational Organizations

For more information about family participation, contact one of these organizations. Many of them sponsor conferences and publish journals or other publications through which teachers and parents can learn more about family involvement.

Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning
The Johns Hopkins University
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 516-0370

Center for the Study of Parent Involvement
370 Camino Pablo
Orinda, CA 94563-1602
(510) 254-0110

Family Involvement Partnership for Learning
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-8173
(800) USA-LEARN

The Home and School Institute
1500 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Suite 42
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 466-3633

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
1509 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-1426
(202) 232-8777
(800) 424-2460

National Association of Partners in Education
209 Madison Street
Suite 401
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 836-4880

National Black Child Development Institute
1023 15th Street, NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005-2602
(202) 387-1281

National Center for Family Literacy
Waterfront Plaza, Suite 200
325 W. Main Street
Louisville, KY 40202-4251
(502) 584-1133

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)
Box 39, 1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 547-9286

National Congress of Parents and Teachers (National PTA)
300 North Wabash Street
Chicago, IL 60611-3690
(312) 670-6782

National Head Start Association
1651 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 739-0875

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013
(800) 695- 0285, (800) 333-6293 (voice)
(202) 884-8200 (TDD and TDY for the hearing impaired)

National Parent Network on Disabilities
1727 King Street, Suite 305
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-6763

SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education
345 South Magnolia Drive, Suite D-23
Tallahassee, FL 32301
(800) 352-6001 or (904) 671-6000

Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA)
P.O. Box 56130
Little Rock, AR 72215-6130
(501) 663-0353

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)
592 Tenth Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30318-5790
(404) 875-9211

Contact Persons for Family Participation Programs Listed in the Matrix

Early Intervention for School Success (EISS)
Contact: Dean Hiser
Orange County Department of Education
200 Kalmus Drive
P.O. Box 9050
Costa Mesa, California 92628-9050
(714) 966-4145

Enriching a Child's Literacy Environment (ECLE)
Contact: Dr. Ethna Reid
Reid Foundation
3310 South 2700 East
Salt Lake City, Utah 84109
(801) 486-5083

Family Intergenerational-Interaction Literacy Model (FILM)
Site Visit Information Contact: Mary Brown, FILM Supervisor
Capitol Hill Elementary School
2717 South Robinson
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73109
(405) 235-0801

Training Information Contact:
Dr. Donna Richardson
Oklahoma City University
Division of Education
2501 North Blackwelder
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106
(405) 521-5373

FAMILY MATH

Contact: Virginia Thompson, Jose' Franco,
Grace Da'vila Coates, Karen Mayfield,
or Helen Raymond
Lawrence Hall of Science
University of California
Berkeley, California 94720-5200
(510) 642-1823

Family Oriented Structured Preschool Activity (FOSPA)

Contact: Jeanne Hoodecheck, Program Director
District #742 Community School
820 8th Avenue South
St. Cloud, Minnesota 56301
(612) 253-5828

High/Scope Preschool and K-3 Curriculum

Contact: A. Clay Shouse, Director,
Development and Services
High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
600 North River Street
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198
(313) 485-2000

Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)

HIPPY USA
c/o Teachers College, Box 113
525 West 120th Street
New York, New York 10027
(212) 678-3500

Kindergarten Integrated Thematic Experiences (KITE)

Contact: Jeanne Stout Burke, Director
Sunshine Gardens School
1200 Miller Avenue, South
San Francisco, California 94080
(415) 588-8082

League of Schools Reaching Out

Contact: Ameetha Palanki, Director
Institute for Responsive Education
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
(617) 353-3309

MegaSkills

Contact: Linda Johnson, Outreach Coordinator
MegaSkills Education Center
1500 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 466-3633

MELD

Contact: Joyce Hoelting
123 North Third Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
(612) 332-7563

Mother-Child Home Program

Contact: Dr. Phyllis Levenstein, Director
National Center for Mother-Child Home Program
3268 Island Road
Wantagh, New York 11793
(516) 785-7077

National Center for Family Literacy

Waterfront Plaza, Suite 200
325 West Main Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40202-4251
(502) 584-1133

On the Way to Success in Reading and Writing with Early Prevention of School Failure

Contact: Luceille Werner, National Director
Peotone School District 207U
114 North Second Street
P.O. Box 956
Peotone, Illinois
(708) 258-3478 or (800) 933-3478

Parents As Teachers (PAT)

Contact: Mildred Winter, Executive Director
Parents As Teachers National Center, Inc.
10176 Corporate Square Drive
Suite 230
St. Louis, Missouri 63132
(314) 432-4330

P.I.A.G.E.T. (Promoting Intellectual Adaptation Given Experiential Transforming) Project

Contact: Dr. Thomas Yawkey
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
165 Chambers Building
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, Pennsylvania 16802
(814) 863-2937

Portage Project

Contact: Julia Herwig, Director
P.O. Box 564
Portage, Wisconsin 53901
(608) 742-8811

School Development Program (Comer)

Contact: James P. Comer
Yale University, Child Study Center
230 South Frontage Road
P.O. Box 3333
New Haven, Connecticut 06510
(203) 785-2548

Search and Teach

Contact: Rosa A. Hagin
School Consultation Center
Fordham University at Lincoln Center
113 West 60th Street
New York, New York 10023
(212) 636 -6000

Success For All

Contact: Robert Slavin or Nancy Madden
Center for Research on Effective Schooling
for Disadvantaged Students
The Johns Hopkins University
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21218
(410) 516-0274

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